

E L E M E N T S
OF THE
HISTORY OF FRANCE,

TRANSLATED FROM THE
A B B E M I L L O T,
CONFESSOR IN ORDINARY TO THE
FRENCH KING.

BY THE
TRANSLATOR OF SELECT TALES
FROM MARMONTEL,

A N D
AUTHOR OF SERMONS
BY A L A D Y.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N:
Printed for J. DODSLEY in Pall-mall, and
T. CADELL in the Strand.
MDCCLXXI.

THE HISTORY OF FRANCE
BY ABBE MILLOT
CONSIDERED IN ORDINARY NO. 10
FRENCH KING

TRANSLATED BY
FROM MARSHALL
VOLUME 1
LONDON

Printed by J. DODD in Strand
LONDON



S E
CH
CH
CH
LE
CH
LE
FR
HI
FR
CH
H

CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

CHARLES V. *surnamed the Wise.* P. 1

CHARLES VI. 25

CHARLES VII. 71

LEWIS XI. 94

CHARLES VIII. 117

LEWIS XII. 127

FRANCIS I. 144

HENRY II. 182

FRANCIS II. 194

CHARLES IX. 203

HENRY III. 234

ELE-

CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME

CHARLES VII.	1
CHARLES VII.	2
CHARLES VII.	3
CHARLES VII.	4
CHARLES VII.	5
CHARLES VII.	6
CHARLES VII.	7
CHARLES VII.	8
CHARLES VII.	9
CHARLES VII.	10
CHARLES VII.	11
CHARLES VII.	12
CHARLES VII.	13
CHARLES VII.	14
CHARLES VII.	15
CHARLES VII.	16
CHARLES VII.	17
CHARLES VII.	18
CHARLES VII.	19
CHARLES VII.	20
CHARLES VII.	21
CHARLES VII.	22
CHARLES VII.	23
CHARLES VII.	24
CHARLES VII.	25
CHARLES VII.	26
CHARLES VII.	27
CHARLES VII.	28
CHARLES VII.	29
CHARLES VII.	30
CHARLES VII.	31
CHARLES VII.	32
CHARLES VII.	33
CHARLES VII.	34
CHARLES VII.	35
CHARLES VII.	36
CHARLES VII.	37
CHARLES VII.	38
CHARLES VII.	39
CHARLES VII.	40
CHARLES VII.	41
CHARLES VII.	42
CHARLES VII.	43
CHARLES VII.	44
CHARLES VII.	45
CHARLES VII.	46
CHARLES VII.	47
CHARLES VII.	48
CHARLES VII.	49
CHARLES VII.	50
CHARLES VII.	51
CHARLES VII.	52
CHARLES VII.	53
CHARLES VII.	54
CHARLES VII.	55
CHARLES VII.	56
CHARLES VII.	57
CHARLES VII.	58
CHARLES VII.	59
CHARLES VII.	60
CHARLES VII.	61
CHARLES VII.	62
CHARLES VII.	63
CHARLES VII.	64
CHARLES VII.	65
CHARLES VII.	66
CHARLES VII.	67
CHARLES VII.	68
CHARLES VII.	69
CHARLES VII.	70
CHARLES VII.	71
CHARLES VII.	72
CHARLES VII.	73
CHARLES VII.	74
CHARLES VII.	75
CHARLES VII.	76
CHARLES VII.	77
CHARLES VII.	78
CHARLES VII.	79
CHARLES VII.	80
CHARLES VII.	81
CHARLES VII.	82
CHARLES VII.	83
CHARLES VII.	84
CHARLES VII.	85
CHARLES VII.	86
CHARLES VII.	87
CHARLES VII.	88
CHARLES VII.	89
CHARLES VII.	90
CHARLES VII.	91
CHARLES VII.	92
CHARLES VII.	93
CHARLES VII.	94
CHARLES VII.	95
CHARLES VII.	96
CHARLES VII.	97
CHARLES VII.	98
CHARLES VII.	99
CHARLES VII.	100

END

ELEMENTS
OF THE
HISTORY OF FRANCE.

CHARLES V. *surnamed the Wise.*

THE new king, whom we have seen take the reins of government during the imprisonment of his father John, became now a pattern for monarchs, and the restorer of the kingdom. His wisdom did all. Ill health prevented his appearance at the head of an army. He could not go through the fatigues of war; but he understood mankind; and from the retirement of his closet, could bring things to a happy issue, by the hands which he employed to recover what his fathers had lost by their imprudence. One of his first cares was, to confirm the civil officers in the exercise of their respective employments; for sovereign authority ceased on

2 ELEMENTS OF THE

the death of a king, and the magistrates were no longer continued in their offices without the consent of his successor.

Charles the Wicked, the most perfidious and turbulent of mankind, had again taken up arms to maintain his pretensions on Burgundy. The king gave the command of the troops to Bertraud of Guesclin, already celebrated under the late reign. He was a knight of Brittany, of a tried courage, who had spent his youth in quarrels that were always determined by a battle. There is a little anecdote told of him, which shews the small hopes his friends had of him in his younger days. His mother used to say, there was not a more vicious boy in the world. 'He is,' says she, 'for ever fighting, and his father and I should both be glad he was under ground.' The world often judges ill of young people from passions, which, properly directed, may tend to good. Under this turbulent behaviour, a principle of heroic virtue lay concealed, which was very soon afterwards displayed in the salvation of France. The troops of the king of Navarre were commanded in Normandy by the capital or lord of Buck. Guesclin sent to offer him battle; but as the capital waited for a reinforcement and would not quit his post, which was inaccessible, this general



HISTORY OF FRANCE. 3

general had recourse to artifice; he made a shew of decamping; the enemy was desirous of pursuing. De Buck represented in vain, that Guesclin was not a man likely to fly before them, and that he only designed to deceive them by a stratagem. They drew him on to an engagement in spite of himself. The French wheeled about and faced them, animated by these words of their chief: 'For the honour of God, my friends, remember you have a new king of France, and that his crown will be this day presented to him by your hands.' They gained a complete victory, and confidence and courage again appeared in the nation. Charles V. as an acknowledgment for this important service, gave the county of Longueville to De Guesclin. Merit thus rewarded, always produces emulation.

War had continued in Brittany from the year 1341. Charles of Blois and the count of Montfort disputed the property of this duchy. They tore the country to pieces by their divisions; but at length agreed on sharing it. The countess of Penthievre, wife to Charles, niece and heiress to the old duke, mortified by this compromise, wrote to her husband, reminding him, that she had always conjured him to defend his inheritance, and that, being in arms, he

4 ELEMENTS OF THE

ought not to have given up any part of it. 'I am but a woman,' added she, 'but I would rather lose my life, or two lives, if I had them, than consent to so shameful a bargain.' This prince having for his wife the most tender affection, chose rather to violate his word than displease her; and the parties determined to finish the dispute by a battle. The king, who favoured Charles of Blois his cousin, as Edward III. supported the count of Montfort, his son-in-law, sent Guesclin to his assistance. Charles would not hearken to the advice of this great man, but rashly charged and was killed in battle. An accomplished prince, if he had not shewn too much complaisance to the haughty humour of his wife. Montfort wept over his corpse. 'My lord,' said the famous English general Chandos to him, 'you could not have your cousin alive, and enjoy the dutchy both: thank God and your friends, that things are as they are.' Charles had the glory of making Guesclin prisoner, who submitted to him, covered with wounds, after having overthrown a great number of his enemies. This battle of Aurai put Montfort in the possession of all Brittany. Whatever desire the king might have to revenge the cause of the countess of Penthievre, he preferred the public

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 5

public good to the satisfying of private resentment. He took the office of a mediator to make peace, and received the homage of the new duke, whom he had reason to fear would make a dangerous enemy. He also made peace with the king of Navarre, on his signing a treaty to renounce all pretensions to Burgundy, Champagne, and the Brill.

The people now seemed to have a right to breathe: but disbanding soldiers is unchaining tigers. They had scarcely enjoyed the peace, before the companies again began their pillage. A great number of lords and knights put themselves at their head; and the kingdom would have fallen a prey to these furious men, if Henry of Transtamare had not offered to take them into his pay, against Peter the Cruel his brother, the king of Castile, who was, by his avarice and tyranny, grown hateful to his subjects. They resolved to confide the enterprise to Guesclin. Chandos demanded a hundred thousand livres for his ransom; the king paid forty thousand, and the pope and Transtamare furnished the rest. Nothing now remained but to prevail on the companies to depart. Guesclin went in search of their chiefs. 'We have all done enough to damn our souls,' said he to

B 3 them;

6 ELEMENTS OF THE

them; 'though you may boast of having done more than I have; but let us now quit the devil, and do honour to God.' Then mentioned other advantages which were more likely to weigh with them; the profits of their expedition, two hundred thousand livres from the king of France, the immense treasures of the king of Castile, and the contributions they would raise in the pope's dominions; for an expedition to Avignon had for them powerful attractions, they having already enriched themselves there; and the knight making no scruple of urging them by this motive. The treaty was concluded without trouble, and the chiefs came and saluted Charles V. who regaled them in a magnificent manner. John of Bourbon, count of Marche, received the title of general, with orders, in every thing, to follow the counsel of Guesclin.

The companies took the road to Avignon, not forgetting to extort money from Urban V. who then probably repented of having contributed towards the enlargement of the French hero, who was indeed the most irreproachable of all the knights; but who was far from being exempt from the faults of his profession. He was scarcely arrived in Castile, with Henry of Transmare, before the whole country submit-

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 7

submitted to them. Peter the Cruel, being dethroned, took to flight, and went to Guienne, to implore the protection of the prince of Wales: that hero, generous and thirsting for glory, flew into Spain, and gained the battle of Navarette, where Guesclin was again made prisoner; the tyrant was re-established, and gave the greatest proofs of ingratitude. Don Pedro did not long enjoy this change of fortune. The prince of Wales, on his return to Bourdeaux, sent home Guesclin, whose ransom was paid by the king. Henry of Transamare, seconded by the knight, returned to attack his brother, whom he killed with his own hand, and became peaceful possessor of Castile. When brothers are enemies, they are generally mortal ones; but there are few examples of a hatred carried to such a furious height as this.

The employment of the companies in a distant part of the world, procured a calm to the kingdom, of which it had great need. Charles dedicated it entirely to the good of the state. Taxes were reduced; money was brought to its standard value; agriculture revived; commerce was encouraged, and the capital adorned. France once more flourished, and by degrees prepared to recover its lost glory. They were on the

point of entering into a war with England, for which there were undoubtedly very justifiable reasons. The prince of Wales, who had received from the hands of his father the principality of Aquitaine; under which name was comprised Guienne, and the neighbouring provinces; very soon exhausted his finances by the great magnificence of his court. The noblest souls are sometimes corrupted by prosperity. He resolved, contrary to the advice of the brave and prudent Chandos, to lay a general tax on all the estates in his dominions. Almost all the nobility were provoked at being subject to an oppression which they had never felt during the French government. The greater part of the lords of fiefs complained to the king. Independant of this attempt on their privileges, Edward III. intoxicated by his victories, had rendered English government odious to them, by withdrawing those favours which he had before lavished upon them. All circumstances seemed to lead to a rupture. The prince of Wales had been consuming by a slow fever ever since his expedition to Spain. His father was carelessly slumbering on the lap of prosperity, and the treaty of Britanny had never been executed in the essential article of renunciations; so that the lords of
Guienne

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 9

Guienne might still be looked on as the vassals of the crown.

The appeal also was received. The prince of Wales was cited to the court of peers, to render an account of the grievances alledged against him. To this citation he haughtily replied, 'That he would willingly come to Paris, but that it should be at the head of sixty thousand men.' Several infringements made on the treaty of peace, vindicated Charles in taking up arms against Edward. War was declared when it was least expected by him. This great politician had lost his foresight, by giving himself up to dangerous fascinations of fortune. The French arms had almost every where the advantage. The king felt his superiority; and not hesitating to use the right of a sovereign, he pronounced in the court of peers, an arret of condemnation against Edward and the prince of Wales, who were declared rebels, and the lands which they possessed in France confiscated, as a punishment for their breach of fealty.

In the mean time, the army of an enemy landed at Calais, ravaged Artois, Piccardy, and Champagne, and even reached the gates of Paris. During these incidents, Guesclin arrived, having been sent for by the wise monarch, who offered him the

constable's sword. Every one applauded this choice. The knight, whose humility did him more honour than all his other qualities, conjured the king to confer the first office in the kingdom on a man more able to fill it. Charles rejected these excuses, and intreated him to accept it, saying, ' That he did not believe there was ' either prince or baron in his kingdom, ' who would not be ready to obey him ; ' but if he was mistaken, and should find ' some of contrary dispositions, he would ' make them feel his just indignation.' We may see in this instance, how much true greatness there is in personal merit, and how truly a king honours himself by honouring it in his subjects. The king's intreaty was in fact a command. Guesclin obeyed; but still fearing that dangerous envy which is always to be found in courts, he endeavoured to guard against it, by beseeching his master not to give credit to any reports which might be made to his disadvantage, without first deigning to hear his defence.

Charles had recommended it to the constable, not to run the hazard of a decisive battle; but an experienced general knows how to interpret the meaning of his prince, and to regulate his own conduct as circumstances require. Guesclin, with a very small

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 11

small army, marched to the enemy, attacked their different quarters, and beat and dispersed them wherever they were found. The fortune of the English was no better by sea, where they were vanquished by the Castile fleet. The following campaign produced still more considerable advantages; Poitou, Auris, and Xaintonge, returned to the French government. In vain did Edward fit out a terrible armament, with a design to come in person and repair his losses. He struggled nine weeks with contrary winds, and was obliged to return to his ports. He was mortified, and disappointed; and speaking of Charles in the bitterness of his vexation, said, 'That no king was ever less armed, yet none had ever given him so much trouble.' In these critical circumstances, he attempted to detach the king of Castile, Henry of Transtamare, from the French interest, to which his fleets had been of great service. The king of Navarre, always ready to injure and deceive, took charge of the negociation. But the Castilian replied, 'That the most advantageous offers should never tempt him to be unfaithful to his allies.' He remonstrated to the king of Navarre in such terms as would have made him blush, if a soul, hardened by guilt, could have been

sensible to the language of virtue. Edward succeeded better with the duke of Brittany. Montfort openly declared himself in his favour. The king, who, in all his steps, observed the rules of justice, sent him an order to fulfil the duties of a vassal. On his refusal, Guesclin had orders to attack him. The Britons naturally hated the English, and the duke increased their aversion, by exacting a tyrannical tax. He was very soon deprived of his dominions, and reduced to seek an asylum in England.

Of all the conquests of Edward, there remained only Calais. The prudence of Charles V. the activity of the constable, and the zeal and courage of the nation, had wrought this change; which gained the king more real honour than his enemy received from the victories of Cressy and Poitiers. It is easy to take advantage of such extraordinary good fortune; but it is very rare to find such strength of mind, as can enable a man to triumph over adversity. The popes often attempted to reconcile these two rivals; shewing themselves the fathers of the christian world. All that Gregory XI. could obtain was a very short truce; during which period Charles made that famous ordinance, which fixes the time when kings
come

come of age, at fourteen. He knew from sad experience, how injurious to the public good, a long minority is. From the time when the custom was established under the second race of fighting only on horseback, with exceeding heavy armour, the king's coming of age was fixed too late; because a prince who could not bear arms, was not judged capable of managing the state.

During the time that the king was adored by his people, the archbishop of Rouen, Philip of Alençon, a bloody prince, engaged him in a dangerous quarrel. Charles demanded a prebend of that church for an ecclesiastic whom he had taken under his protection; and not being able to obtain it, he seized the temporal possessions of the prelate. This indulgence of his resentment was very injudicious. The archbishop, still less moderate, put the kingdom under an interdiction, flew to the pope for protection, and made a league with Charles the Wicked, assuring him, that he would take the field in person, and fight with the same ardour as any other knight or layman. In some reigns, this rebellion would have been followed by the most fatal consequences; but the wisdom of the government stifled the seeds of discord, and the seditious prelate suffered only

only the disgrace of having undertaken a criminal enterprize.

The death of the prince of Wales was a terrible stroke to England. The French also regretted an hero no less amiable by his virtues, than revered for his warlike qualities. Never was a son more respectful, nor a conqueror more modest. It was imagined, that his death would have made Edward wish for a peace. The king of France, who, by his oeconomy, had amassed vast wealth without exciting murmurs from his people; had built thirty-five large ships of the line, and an infinite number of less vessels; and who found himself in a condition to undertake any thing, proposed conditions truly advantageous to the vanquished: nevertheless, the British ministers would not accept of them, without first consulting their master. On their return to England for that purpose, they found him dead. This great prince had reigned fifty-two years. Too much ambition exposed him to loss and disappointments. He expired, abandoned by his subjects, in the hands of a mistress, who thought only of enriching herself by his spoils. Richard II. son to the Black Prince, succeeded him.

The truce being ended, five French armies spread terror in different places.

Charles,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 15

Charles, at the beginning of his reign, could hardly muster twelve hundred men. What a prodigious change was this! but perfidy pursued even him, notwithstanding his great power, and the success of his undertakings. If there ever was a soul formed only for guilt, it was that which animated the king of Navarre. His chamberlaine and secretary, being arrested on suspicions which were but too well grounded, discovered the whole plan of his projects. They found sufficient proof of his having formed the design of poisoning the king. Almost all his fortified towns being seized, he fled into England, and delivered Cherbourg, the strongest place that was left him, into the hands of the English. Brest had likewise been delivered up to the same power, by Montfort: and thus were they made masters of the best ports in France, Calais, Cherbourg, Brest, and Bourdeaux.

This was the epocha of the famous schism of the West, which, through the close connection that subsists betwixt the church and state, threw them both into confusion. The popes, from the year 1308, had resided at Avignon. Our kings found their advantage in it, though the exactions of the apostolic chamber ruined the clergy of France. Gregory XI. in 1376, transferred

red the papal seat to Rome, at the intreaty and by the advice of St. Catherine of Si-
 enne, a nun, whom the Florentines had
 employed in this affair. He died very
 soon afterwards in Italy, where he had
 already repented of residing. The cardi-
 nals assembled at the conclave. The peo-
 ple loudly demanded a Roman pope. The
 archbishop of Bari, a Neopolitan, was elec-
 ted, and proclaimed. Every thing seemed
 tranquil: six cardinals who resided in
 France had confirmed the election; but
 the new pope, Urban VI. acknowledged
 by the sacred college, rendered himself
 odious by extreme severity and indiscreet
 behaviour. The cardinals retired, declar-
 ing their election forced; and therefore
 null. They then elected at Fondi near
 Naples, Robert, son of the count of Ge-
 neva, who took the name of Clement VII.
 Urban put to death, in the cruellest man-
 ner, several cardinals, who unfortunately
 fell into his hands. Clement, on his side,
 took to arms, and breathed out anathemas.
 Both parties cut each other's throats with
 implacable fury. Never did ambition
 produce in the church such great evils. The
 king consulted and deliberated a
 long time before he could decide between
 the two competitors; at length he declared
 for Clement. The university, who were
 before

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 17

before the friends of Urban, conformed themselves in general to the sentiments of the court. But several of its members insisted upon continuing neuter till it should be decided by a council. This was the most prudent determination, and it afterwards prevailed; but we seldom take the right side of the question till we have proved from experience the inconvenience of the other. Catherine of Sienne, whose revelations made a great noise throughout all Europe, acted a part sufficiently striking, in writing to all in favour of Urban. The king received from her a letter, where the Clementine cardinals were treated as devils incarnate. His holiness was no longer looked upon as infallible, and his remonstrances were disregarded. The English were zealous Urbanists, for no other reason but because the French had embraced the contrary party. Clement, overpowered in Italy, endeavoured to establish himself in Avignon: and this schism lasted forty years, which gave infinite scandal.

The greatest men are liable to errors, and Charles the Wise committed one, which embittered the latter part of his reign. The duke of Brittany, who had been deprived of his possessions, and was a fugitive in England, appeared to him to
be

be a victim which it was very easy for him to offer up, and his courtiers flattered him with the prospect of reuniting that dutchy to the crown. He knew that the enmity of Montfort was irreconcilable, and resolving to push him to the last extremity, he cited him to the court of peers, without observing the legal forms. He had no notice of the time of adjournment, nor any letters of safe conduct. The king himself impleaded his vassal, and determined on confiscating his lands. The lords of Brittany formed an alliance to prevent the execution of an arret, which they looked on as contrary to the laws and rights of their country. The same people who had before been active against Montfort, made a quick transition from hatred to the strongest attachment, chusing rather to obey a duke of Brittany than a king of France. This prince renewed his treaty with the English, returned to his dominions, and was received there as a deliverer. The king was much embarrassed by this unforeseen determination: he had gone too far to retreat; but he made but a feeble stand, and the few troops which he sent, had no success.

It was now that Bureau of Riviere, an insidious courtier, blessed with a happy address, abused the royal favour, by instilling

stilling into the king's ear, suspicions to the prejudice of Guesclin, insinuating, he had favoured the duke of Brittany. Charles wrote a letter reproaching him with it. This was wounding the honour of a hero in the most tender point. It is said that Guesclin returned the sword of constable in resentment. This great man was raised so much above the reach of envy, that princes and great men crowded to defend him. The king acknowledged his error, and looked on it as his duty to make reparation. The dukes of Anjou and Bourbon made it their business to find out the constable, and persuade him to return to court, who, with some reluctance, complied. He was employed in an expedition to the southern part of the world. He conjured the king when he took leave, to make peace with his countrymen the Britons, from whom France could draw a powerful assistance, if necessary. Charles assured him he would think of it, and endeavour to take the means. This was the last time that Guesclin ever saw his master; being seized with a mortal disease as he was besieging a fortress of Auvergne, he there finished his glorious race, recommending to his officers, never to treat as enemies, artificers, women, children, or old men; and testified his repentance for having,

having, in his youth, sometimes deviated from that rule. The besieged English paid a kind of homage to his shade. They had promised to surrender to him, if they were not assisted by a certain time. When that term was expired, the commander, followed by the garrison, threw themselves at the feet of the corps, and laid the keys of the fortress on the coffin. His tomb in the church of St. Dennis, which is the burial place of our kings, is a valuable monument of the gratitude of Charles V. The most celebrated captains who had fought under his orders, Clifson Sancerre, and Couci, refused the sword of the constable, which they thought themselves not worthy to bear after this hero. Clifson, however, accepted of it, in the commencement of the ensuing reign. He was brother at arms to Guesclin. This fraternity in arms consisted of an association of either two or several knights, who bound themselves in a strait union to defend each other against all who should attack them, except the princes to whom they were subjects or vassals. This treaty was sometimes accompanied with religious ceremonies, and sometimes sealed with the blood of the knights, which they drank with their wine. The ancient manners of the Scythians seemed to have travelled into this kingdom.

Though

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 21

Though the Britons had sued for a peace, and Charles was disposed to grant it, yet Montfort having made a new league with the king's enemies, negotiations were dropped, and hostilities were continued. An English army penetrated into Champagne, where it made dreadful ravages: but Charles adhering to his first maxims, would not venture a decisive battle. 'Let the English take their own way,' said he, 'and they will destroy themselves.' The French, under the command of the duke of Burgundy, burnt with impatience to engage; but the ill health of the king suspended the execution of their designs. He had been poisoned in his youth by Charles the Wicked; a German physician stopped the effect of the poison, by opening his arm, and then said, 'that whenever the wound healed he would die.' His prediction was verified. Charles perceiving his end approach, foresaw the storms to which his son, who was yet but young, would be exposed; he took all possible precaution to prevent it, and would have succeeded, without doubt, could prudence prevent ill-fortune.

The kingdom lost a master, who seemed to live only for its good. He used to say, 'He knew no happiness in royalty, but that

‘ that of making others happy.’ This prince, as Mr. Henault observes, deserved an eulogium which should serve as a lesson to all kings; which was, ‘ That though
‘ no prince ever asked advice more, or
‘ suffered himself to be governed less, the
‘ political, moral, and christian virtues
‘ were all united in his person.’ A man of quality having once held an indecent discourse before the dauphin, he banished him his court, saying, ‘ That nothing
‘ ought to be so much attended to as the
‘ bringing up children in virtue, that they
‘ may, in the end, excel, in purity of manners, those whom their birth has set
‘ them above.’ His taste for letters still heightened his glory. He often repeated these words: ‘ The clerks cannot be
‘ too much honoured, if they make themselves masters of that true knowledge
‘ which they ought to possess; for as long
‘ as wisdom is encouraged in this kingdom
‘ it will continue in prosperity; but as
‘ soon as she is discarded, it will fall to
‘ the ground.’ He is looked on as the true founder of the royal library. King John had hardly left twenty volumes; but he had got together nine hundred, among whom were very few good authors of antiquity: not one copy of Cicero; but several books of judicial astrology. This
absurd

absurd science, the offspring of gross superstition, was then in the highest reputation at court. In these days began the unbroken chain of our poets. The historian Froissard made verses; poetry was flat and low till Dante and Petrarch had made in Italy a brilliant opening. Poets, in those days, passed for forcerers, in the mind of many people, and the inquisition made war against them. Several universities established in the kingdom, cultivated the sciences, always full of errors. Those of Paris were so considerable, that in an assembly held on the occasion of schism, there were found ten thousand agents, who had a right of voting. Pope Honorius, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, had forbidden the learning of civil law, for fear this necessary study should turn them from theology. It was owing to this cause that they delivered themselves up to the canonical law, which was a certain road to preferment, and which often carried theology along with it. Clement VII. was no friend to the theologians; saying, 'He looked on them as visionaries, filling the scholastic part of the world with subtilties.' The confusion was still greater in the jurisdiction which the children of the choir of Puy in Velai exercised, as judges of the Jews, condemn-

condemning them to pay fines. In order to restrain military licence, he forbid soldiers leaving the army without the permission of a superior officer; nor were they suffered to force citizens and peasants to raise companies, without an express order. The game of hazard was forbidden, as were likewise tennis, billiards, draughts, quoits, &c. to make way for the long bow, the cross bow, &c. which were of more service to people who bore arms. The use of artillery became frequent in these sieges. Some attributed this destructive invention to Roger Bacon, an English cordelier; others to Berthwold Schwarts, a German one; but the certain epocha cannot be fixed. It is an undoubted truth, that the Chinese were acquainted with the fatal secret of powder a long time before it came into Europe; to change all the order of war, and make knighthood fall to the ground.

CHARLE

CHARLES VI.

THE name of Charles VI. brought with it every species of misfortune with which France could be overpowered. Ambition, avarice, discord, the spirit of cabal and rebellion; every unruly passion seemed leagued with fortune to ruin the state. Those whose duty it was to have supported it, became its most dangerous enemies. At this period, history is nothing more than a continued series of events, where we may learn to detest vice, by groaning over the evils which it brought on our country.

Charles was only in his twelfth year. The dukes of Anjou, of Berri, and of Burgundy, brothers of the late king, and the duke of Bourbon, his brother-in-law; the first already odious by his violence and oppression; the second, more moderate, but inconstant and trifling; the third, one whose shining merit covered a well directed ambition; the fourth, full of solid virtues; had, all at once, a contest on the subject of the regency. Of right it belonged to the duke of Anjou; but Charles V. fearing his character, had taken measures to limit his power. This prince or-

VOL. II. C dered

dered by will, that the king should be anointed in some months; that till then the duke of Anjou should govern in quality of regent; and after the anointing, Charles should be declared major before age, governing in his person by the advice of his four uncles. This short regency gave the duke of Anjou an opportunity of satisfying his insatiable avarice. He seized the treasures which had been amassed by the oeconomy of Charles the Wise. Far from lessening the subsidies, according to the dying orders of this good king, he increased them; and thus sowed the seeds of sedition, the effects of which are so terrible after the coronation. The people of Paris came insolently to demand the suppression of the taxes. The court appeared to yield less through reason than fear. The first steps sometimes decide the authority of government. Encouraged by this success, the rebels grew more audacious. They demanded the expulsion of the Jews, pillaging houses, and committing innumerable excesses: a small beginning of the disorders which afterwards followed.

The English had the advantage through these troubles to escape the dangers which threatened. Nothing hindered their retiring into Brittany; but the Britons, as
 spirited

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 27

spirited against them as resolute not to submit to the French government, put their duke under the necessity of coming to terms with France. Montfort made peace on condition of being reacknowledged duke of Brittany, and being put again into possession of his confiscated lands; engaging to pay to the king two hundred thousand franks to defray the expences of the war, and to aid him either for or against any other power, especially the kings of England and Navarre. After this treaty, he made a secret protestation against the agreement he had entered into: a singular means of setting himself free from scruples, and reserving the right of breaking his word. He went to Paris to ask pardon and do homage. This being a league homage which engaged the person in this manner, that the dutchy, and he who belonged to it, should, upon failure, incur the censure of felony, the duke pretended, that he owed nothing more than simple homage; the court was satisfied to receive it in general terms, and it was paid according to ancient custom. Thus ended a war famous for nothing more than for several single combats, wherein the French knights had constantly the advantage over the English. There was not any thing better adapted to the

taste of knight-errantry than these kind of battles, which, in reality, decided nothing, and were of no other use than only to illustrate the names of a few champions.

The duke of Anjou, the adopted son of Jane queen of Naples, had no other thought than that ensuring to himself the possession of the kingdom, and sacrificing France, where his quality of first prince of the blood gave him the principal authority. Closely united with Clement VII. he shared with him a part of the ecclesiastical estates, which became a prey to the greedy avarice of the court of Avignon. All was not enough to satisfy the rapacity of this prince: though he was master of the treasure of Charles V. which amounted to above a hundred and seventy millions of our money, yet he endeavoured to renew the taxes which had been recently taken off; by this means, adding to, rather than lessening the grievances of his country. These fresh exactions caused fresh insurrections. Paris and Rouen set the example. The populace gave a loose to their fury, while several of the citizens suffered in silence. The seditious, in order to have a chief, drew from his prison Hugh Aubriot, the provost of the merchants, who had filled the capital with useful monuments, and whom they had condemned

demned as a Jew and heretick, because he had restrained the students of the university in their licentiousness, who were often guilty of the greatest crimes. Father Daniel paints him as a villain who deserved the fire; Mr. Villaret, as a depraved friend of the public. The use which Aubriot made of his liberty, seemed to speak for him. Instead of putting himself at the head of the rebels, he went to Burgundy, easy, lively, and tranquil. The excessive fury of the rebels daily increased. The abolition of aids and assistances was a second triumph, and a new stroke for debasing the authority of government. At length, the duke of Anjou gave up the direction of the state to the duke of Burgundy; for the duke of Berri was too weak, and the duke of Bourbon too mild, to counterbalance his power.

A general insurrection of the Flemings reduced the count of Flanders to implore the protection of the king. The duke of Burgundy, his son-in-law and heir, had a personal interest in defending it. The war was carried on with spirit. Charles VI. was desirous of putting himself at the head of his army. The Flemings, under the direction of a son of the celebrated Barneville, braved danger and death. They were courageous, but undisciplined;

plined; so that well managed troops could not fail of conquering. The battle of Rosbec was nothing more than a massacre of these unhappy wretches; we are assured, that no less than forty thousand of them perished, while the French did not lose fifty men. All Flanders, except Gand, was soon overcome. Courtray willingly surrendered, and the king sojourned there. He had no sooner left the city, than it was delivered to the fire and sword; some say by his orders, and others, through the natural impetuosity and resentment of the French, at the sight of the gold spurs which the Flemings had preserved as monuments of the ancient battle of Courtray, so fatal to France. This atrocious vengeance shews the barbarity of our ancestors.

The victory of Rosbec was not celebrated at Paris, by any demonstrations of joy. It was now time to punish an obstinate rebellious people. The king entered the city at the head of his troops. Three hundred persons were loaded with chains, and the inhabitants were ordered to dispose of their arms in the Louvre: there were found sufficient to arm a hundred thousand men. In vain did the dutchess of Orleans and the university sue for mercy to be shewn to the capital. Executions began;
but

but with more cruelty than justice. The advocate-general, Desmares, a magistrate of seventy, whose eloquence had often had great effect on the Parisians, and whose services were deserving of the highest recompence; this great man was included in the number of criminals, for no other reason but because the dukes of Berri and Burgundy hated him. The pretence for his punishment was, according to some authors, that he had not quitted Paris as other magistrates had, on the commotions; though he had only remained in it, to employ his credit in calming the sedition. On the scaffold, he was ordered to beg pardon of the king: but this venerable old man replied, with great firmness, ‘ I have faithfully served Philip his great grandfather, John his grandfather, and Charles his father. Not one of these princes ever reproached me with a crime; nor would this, had he lived long enough to know mankind: but of God alone do I demand pardon.’

Some days after this, the king declared that he would shew mercy to the remainder of the Parisians, and change their punishment to a fine. This was a hateful alteration, contrived by the dispensers of authority, who dared to lead their sovereign

into their base avaricious views. These fines were carried to excess, and the third-part of them never went into the treasury. They re-established aids, the twelfth-penny, the excise upon salt, and several other impositions. They deliberated if it was not in their power to render these taxes perpetual. Nothing more was necessary to reduce the people to despair. Rouen, and several other towns in the kingdom, were treated in the same manner as Paris.

The young king of England, Richard II. was likewise governed by his ambitious uncles, and was a stranger to tranquillity. The Flemings demanded assistance against their prince. Urban VI. published a crusade against the partizans of Clement VII. Fanaticism heated minds already stirred up by discord. An English bishop, known under the title of Generalissimo of the crusade, in a short time put himself at the head of a numerous army, and attacked the lands belonging to the count of Flanders, though he was attached to Urban's party. This prince was vanquished; but Charles VI. revenged his death, and again drove the English out of Flanders. At length the count of Flanders ended his days, leaving his vast possessions to his only daughter, the wife of Philip the Hardy,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 33

Hardy, duke of Burgundy, who now became one of the most powerful sovereigns in Europe.

On the other hand, Philip of Anjou, with French money, vainly endeavoured to establish himself in Italy. The queen of Naples had been strangled by Charles of Duras, surnamed the Peaceful, to whom Urban had given that kingdom. The duke of Anjou, far from revenging and recovering his heritage, saw his army perish by disease and famine. He lost a battle, and was himself wounded, and died in dreadful despair. Scarcely a tenth-part of his troops returned into France. The chief part of his lords and knights supported themselves by begging on the road home. There are few examples to be found of more fatal consequences of ambition than this; which, after having ruined the state, drew the author of its ruin into new disasters.

Peace was the only remedy for these public evils; but the warm disposition of Charles, rather than the unwarrantable pretensions of the English, rendered it almost impossible. After vain negotiations, it was resolved to make a descent in England. The Gantois formed a conspiracy to burn the fleet, which being discovered, the duke of Burgundy took the advantage

of turning the French arms against the Flemish rebels. Such was the ferocity of this people, that several prisoners refused the pardon which was offered them.

‘The king’s power,’ say they, ‘is sufficient, in being able to subject the body, but he is not able to enslave the souls of the Flemings: on the contrary, when we are all killed, our bones will assemble, and form an army to fight.’

One of them, notwithstanding, offered to behead the rest, on condition his own life was spared. They were not only his countrymen, but some of them his relations, whom he thus offered to butcher. His services were accepted; he executed all, and was, in his turn, executed himself; being looked on as a monster, with whom it was meritorious to break one’s word. The duke of Burgundy alone reaped the fruits of this campaign: Flanders entirely submitted to him; unwilling, however, to acknowledge the pope of Avignon, who absorbed, by his odious extortions, the riches of the clergy.

The design of attacking England still subsisting, there appeared, at the sluice-gate, a formidable armament, where all the forces of the kingdom seemed to be united. Fifteen hundred vessels were employed to transport a hundred thousand men.

men. The king was ready to embark; but was detained by waiting for the duke of Berri: he sent to him courier after courier; but the duke did not arrive till the season was so far advanced as not to permit them to sail. There is not a doubt but the miscarriage of this enterprise was a designed thing; whether through jealousy against those who had projected it, or whether through attachment to the English, from whom, it was reported, great bribes had been received; however it was, the preparations were thrown away, and the misunderstanding of the princes continually increased the wounds of the state.

This year furnished one great example of vice punished in this life, of which there are too few instances. The most abandoned of men, Charles the Wicked, king of Navarre, perished in a manner suitable to the horror of his crimes; exhausted by debauchery, at fifty-six years old, in order to renew his natural warmth, he wore a cloth dipped in spirits of wine; through the carelessness of a valet de chambre, this cloth took fire, and he suffered the most dreadful tortures, of which he died some days afterwards. An Englishman is charged, in the year 1348, with a design of poisoning the king, the king's brother, his uncles, and the principal lords

of the court. The villain having access to the kitchen, would have perpetrated this crime, had he not been apprehended on his arrival; perhaps on the advice of the prince of Navarre, who was as faithful as his father was perfidious. He confessed every thing. Among many extraordinary events, I must mention one more remarkable than the rest; which is, that a law-suit was commenced against the king of Navarre, two months after his death. The peers being assembled, the chief summoner cited him to appear at the gate of the parliament-house, and at other gates; but as he did not obey, they proceeded according to form. This cause was referred and never after revived. They probably only endeavoured to confirm the title of the king of Navarre to his possessions in Normandy. It may be of use to observe, that the villany which this black wretch, Charles the Wicked, employed, never answered his end; and that, if he made the misery of others his own happiness, that diabolical happiness was often imbittered by cruel chagrin.

A third armament against England was of as little consequence as the preceding ones. The constable, Oliver of Clifton, that brother, in warlike achievements, to Guesclin, a man great in arms, but violent

lent and avaricious, was employed in this enterprize. The hatred which the duke of Brittany had towards Clifson, made his designs prove abortive. He was desirous of marrying one of his daughters to John of Blois, whose ransom he would have paid, that nobleman being still a prisoner to the English. Montfort, who owed an old grudge to Clifson, as being of the house of Blois, no longer kept any bounds; he drew the constable to his court and sent him to prison; at the same time, giving orders to Bavalan, one of his officers, to drown him in the dead of night. The next day, awaking from his transport of fury, he felt all the enormity of this attempt, and gave himself up to despair: upon which the prudent Bavalan let him know he had not executed so unjust an order, and that Clifson was still living. He was obliged to purchase his liberty. Little reason was there, why the king should not have carried the war into Brittany, to revenge an affront which brought a reflection on the crown. The duke was going to repair to Paris; but the English expedition not taking place, was an irreparable misfortune, especially at a time when the English revolting against Richard II. were on the point of dethroning him. The impetuous temper of the king was turned
 against

against the duke of Gueldres, a young prince who had challenged him. He marched in person to chastise him with an éclat: he suffered himself to be appeased by a quick satisfaction, and very soon recalled his army. Such were the conclusions of all the expences and taxes by which the kingdom was exhausted. Every means of extorting money was employed. They sold to the Jews the right of ruining the citizens, permitting them for ten years to exact of their debtors interest upon interest, and forbidding any judge to oppose the abuses which they should be guilty of during that time. Their extortions amounted to near two-thirds of the principal, for one year only. These infamous usurers were driven from the kingdom in 1394, never more to return to it.

Charles VI. tired of submitting to the government of the dukes of Berri and Burgundy, to whom all the misfortunes of France were attributed, took the reins of the state into his own hands, and set the constable of Clisson at the head of the council. This change was such as might have been of advantage had the king joined to the qualities of a good heart, those of a prudent solid understanding. He was humane, generous, and brave; but had a kind of impetuous vivacity;
was

was light, imprudent, wrong headed, incapable of reflection, and governed by his caprices. The duke of Bourbon, though still retained at court, had but a small share in the direction of state affairs: his disinterested advice prevailed but little against the passions of greedy ministers, who had taken possession of the young monarch: he therefore secured the first opportunity that offered of absenting himself with honour. The Republic of Genoa sued for succour against the Corsairs of Africa. The charge of this expedition was given to him. The Christian knights now went to fight in a country which had been fatal to St. Lewis, and very soon returned with a barren glory. They comforted themselves, however, for the little success of their enterprise, by the pleasure of recounting their adventures. The warlike humour of the king grew still warmer by hearing of such great prowess; he immediately resolved to carry arms into the land of the Mussulmen, 'to fulfil,' he said, 'the vows of his ancestors.' There was no dissuading him from this design, but by representing that it would be better to begin by the extirpation of schism. He then determined to pass into Italy, without any other motive than to subject it by force of arms to Clement VII. His competitor, Urban,

Urban, was dying, after a military expedition : but the cardinals of Rome gave him a successor, Boniface IX. and the church was continually divided between two parties, who were constantly tearing each other to pieces, under the banners of religion.

The intrigues of the court, and new incidents, very soon took off all attention to this Italian war. Peter de Craon, a powerful and vicious nobleman, having been disgraced, retired into Brittany. The duke of Montfort persuaded him, that Clifton was the author of his disgrace. This was sufficient to excite in his mind the design of a base and cruel revenge. At a time when the court was engaged only in rejoicing, on the recovery of the king from a dangerous sickness, Craon stole secretly to Paris, and, with a company of assassins, attacked the constable in the night, as he was going from the ball. Clifton defended himself alone, till at length he fell senseless on the ground. The murderers thinking him dead, took to flight. His wounds, however, were not dangerous ; and the king, who had been pierced with the most lively affliction by this accident, had the consolation of seeing him soon well, and vowed vengeance on his assassins. He sent to the duke of Brittany

to

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 41

to demand that Craon, who had taken refuge with him, should be delivered up. The duke replied, 'That he was ignorant of the place of his retreat.' This answer irritated Charles still more, and he resolved to take up arms, in spite of the dukes of Berri and Burgundy, enemies of the constable, whom they accused of having enriched himself at the expence of the state (a crime which they themselves had been guilty of). His immense treasures made this accusation but too probable. A war, undertaken merely for the private quarrel of Clisson, excited the murmurs of all France. They had no effect on the king, who began to march: as he was crossing the forest of Mans, he, all on a sudden, was struck with the appearance of a stranger, dressed in a white robe, barefooted and bareheaded, who flying towards him with a terrible countenance, seized the bridle of his horse, crying out, 'Advance no further; return, for thou art betrayed.' The king's fright was not so great as to prevent his continuing his rout; but some moments after, a page who carried his lance let it fall on the helmet of another page; at the noise of the stroke, the king imagining he was betrayed, seemed to be seized with a sudden frenzy, he drew his sword, overthrew the pages, and struck

struck all that he met, till, in his rage, he broke his sword, and his strength began to fail him; they then came up, and taking him into custody, he was conveyed into Mans half dead. Some believed him to have been poisoned, others thought him bewitched; but this frenzy seized him only in consequence of the heat of the sun, (it being then the month of August) and the fright he had met with in the forest. He had before shewn some marks of a delirium; sad presages of a disorder of which he was never cured. Boniface IX. assured the world, that God punished the king for supporting the antipope of Avignon. Clement VII. and his adherents said, that he was punished for not having made war on the antipope of Rome. Thus they interpreted the decrees of Providence according to their own invention. Let us adore his designs; but let us not rashly attempt to fathom them.

While the unhappy Charles recovered his reason by slow degrees, the dukes of Berri and Burgundy ravaged the state. Clifton fled, and the other ministers either made their escape or were arrested; and their ruin drew after it that of their creatures. The king left them to do as they would. Every means was put in practice to amuse him, perhaps more through policy

licy than any real design of curing him. These amusements produced a fresh calamity. The whole court were assembled at a ball, the king entered disguised like a savage, conducting five lords dressed in the same manner, and linked to each other. His brother, the duke of Orleans, indiscreetly drew too near with a flambeaux in his hand: their garments being of linen dipped in pitch, and stuck with bunches of hemp, took fire, and communicated in a moment to four of these lords. The accident was fatal. Charles saved himself by running at a distance, and the dutchess of Berri hid him under the tail of her manteau. His fits of madness immediately returned; and, by a folly greater than his own, they sent for one Guienne a magician, who engaged to cure him by a word, and who for a long time imposed upon the court, which was as superstitious as it was corrupt. The monarch remained seven months in this pitiable state. He afterwards recovered, only so far as to have intervals of reason, which were interrupted by the most shocking relapses. His reign lasted thirty years after this calamity, which was nothing more than thirty years of the most dreadful evils to the kingdom.

The

The negotiations of peace between France and England were continually renewed, but always in vain. The English demanded the thorough execution of the treaty of Brittany, which they themselves had so badly observed; and the French insisted on the demolition of Calais, a place of the utmost importance to their enemies. Richard II. despised and hated by his people, endeavoured to unite himself with Charles. He asked of him his daughter Isabella in marriage. They concluded a truce of twenty-eight years. The two kings met in Piccardy, and gave each other a thousand testimonies of their affection. They made an agreement to act in concert for the extinction of schism; but the royal authority was too much weakened to contend against the ambition of the pontifs.

Clement VII. having died of chagrin, after having seen a memorial, wherein the university proposed measures to pacify the church. The cardinals of Avignon signed an act, by which they obliged themselves upon oath, every one in particular, to renounce the pontificate, when the election should be made, if the majority among them, looked on this method as proper to finish the troubles. The cardinal

nal Peter de Lune, an Arragonian, was elected, and took the name of Benedict XIII. He immediately ratified the act which we have just mentioned, and his first steps seemed to promise nothing but moderation and concord: deceitful appearances, under which he veiled a fiery ambition, and an inflexible obstinacy. In vain the king sent to him his brother, and two of his uncles, to determine him to the cession: in vain the cardinals declared, that it was not only convenient but necessary. The tiara had inspired him with other sentiments. He at first sent evasive answers, and concluded by a formal refusal, without paying any regard to an oath which exacted the sacrifice of his dignity. Boniface IX. was no less resolute to die pope. At length they determined on that part, which, perhaps, they ought to have taken at the beginning of the schism: a national council, which assembled at Paris, decreed, that the competitors should remain neuter. Conformable to this decree, the king declared he would renounce obedience to Benedict, and forbid the sending any money out of his dominions to Avignon. The fierce pontiff refused to yield, and called in the Arragonian troops to his assistance. He maintained a long siege against the marshal of Boucicault. We shall,

shall, in its proper place, take up this affair again, which is unfortunately of such a nature as to lessen the respect for spiritual power, with those who have the injustice to confound the usurpations of man with the sacred rights of the church.

The marriage of the king of England with Isabella of France; Brest and Cherbourg evacuated, and sold to Charles VI.; the ruinous expences of Richard II. who oppressed his people, and dissipated their treasures, raised a nation against him, who were always terrible in their rebellions. This prince was desirous of governing as a tyrant. The young duke of Lancaster, his cousin-german, a hero full of ambition, took advantage of these circumstances to dethrone him. Richard vanquished, shewed himself the most cowardly of men. They publickly tried him, and he acknowledged himself unworthy of the scepter. The usurper kept him in prison, where he was assassinated; and this violence appeared to the English only an act of justice. Henry IV. (that was the name which the duke of Lancaster took on him) ensured to himself, first by his policy, and afterwards by his cruelty, the enjoyment of a kingdom acquired by guilt. The court of France made haste to negotiate with him. It made some secret attempts to recover

cover Guienne, which Henry saw without concern. 'Neither the Bardelois nor the 'Baiennois,' said he, 'will ever turn 'against us: they are free and quiet; 'were they under the French dominion, 'they would be taxed and retaxed two or 'three times in a year.' He confirmed the truce, less through fear than prudence, to strengthen his new authority.

While England applauded itself for this change of government, France saw occasions for grief and alarms daily increasing. Two Augustines having boasted of being able to cure the king, after useless remedies, and magical operations, still more useless, having made, in the head of their patient, incisions which redoubled his disorder, their conduct excited suspicion, they were observed, and acknowledged their frauds and debauches. Being interrogated from whence proceeded the king's malady, they attributed it to fascination; at the same time accusing the duke of Orleans. The imposture was discovered by their own confession; and they expiated their guilt at the grave. The punishment of these monks, who had abused the court during six months, proved, that the madness of Charles VI. was not all that the kingdom had to fear. If superstition, and a notion of magic disturbed the imagination, the frantic

tic passions had gained dominion over the heart, and produced remediless evils.

The duke of Orleans, ridiculously accused of having bewitched the king, had really deprived the duke of Burgundy of great part of his credit. Jealousy divided these princes; and they became mortal enemies. The first obtained of his brother the administration of the finances, and very soon afterwards the government of the state. A fresh imposition, which he established at a time when he should rather have done something to have quieted the minds the people, rendered him as odious as his debauches had rendered him despicable. He was obliged to suppress the tax. Loud were the murmurs that were heard from all parts. The dukes of Orleans and Burgundy took to arms on this occasion; but the people prevented the civil war. It was decided in the council, that when the king was sick the duke of Burgundy should govern. His age, his experience, the extent of his dominions, all pleaded in his favour. The duke of Orleans could not avoid subscribing to a determination confirmed by the sovereign. His resentment was not the less lively. The connection which he was, with too much reason, suspected to have with the queen Isabella of Bavaria, contributed more than all the friend-

friendship of his brother, to support the jealousy of his rival. Isabella governed a husband, whom she, in a short time, openly betrayed, and obtained, from his stupid complaisance, the power of annulling and revoking the donations which he had made, or should make hereafter. Holding him thus chained, she forgot all duties; her own children wanting the necessaries of life. Their governess confessed to the king, that they often had neither apparel or food. 'Alas!' said he, 'I am no better treated myself.' We cannot help being struck with horror in reading, that, for five months, he neither went to bed or changed his linen; they scarcely deigned to remember that he existed. What could the people hope from the humanity of the great, if the sick king was not allowed any succour?

The death of the duke of Burgundy left the field free to the ambition of the duke of Orleans. Already master of the queen's heart, he was very soon master of the state, under the title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The oppressed, unpitied people poured out maledictions and reproaches against both. But that which was most to be feared by the king's brother was the settled hatred and cruelty of the new duke of Burgundy, John Sans

Peur, a prince who made a jest of religion and morality, and was wicked through taste and system. He demanded being admitted to the council, where his quality of father-in-law to the dauphin added to the greatness of his power. The duke of Orleans, who seemed to look upon all the riches of the nation as a prey for his avarice, proposed a new general tax. No person dared to contradict it. This was a glorious occasion for the duke of Burgundy to reconcile himself to the people's affections. He represented their miseries in the most lively terms; the vices of the administration, and the ill use made of the finances. He offered himself to defend the kingdom, if their enemies should attack them; declaring moreover, that he would soon put a stop to the payment of this tax in his dominions. Not being able to prevail by his advice, he retired, and was, from that time, the idol of the Parisians. His presence became necessary, and he was recalled. He returned with his troops; the queen and the duke of Orleans quitted Paris, and carried off the dauphin with them. John Sans Peur pursued them, and brought him back, for which he received the thanks of the city and university. This last body had more power than ever, and employed it usefully for the extinction of schism;

schism; but sometimes abused it, by arrogating to themselves a kind of inspection into public affairs. The duke of Orleans once said to its deputies, 'Return to your schools, and meddle only with your own business.' From that time the university declared themselves his enemies. It is surprising, that men devoted to the study of letters, and respectable through the knowledge which was then so rare, could not divest themselves of that madness which drew them from their sphere, darkening a real merit by chimerical pretensions.

The two princes on the point of coming to battle, appeared, on a sudden, to be truly reconciled; but the duke of Burgundy meditated the ruin of his rival, who joined to the practice of devotion the most abandoned libertinism; a monstrous mixture, by which people keep their vices in countenance, by mingling with them an appearance of virtue. He boasted of favours he had received from the ladies of the court, and named among his mistresses the duchess of Burgundy, a woman of an unblemished character. This boast was, perhaps, what shortened his days. Never villain better concealed the most infamous design, than did the duke of Burgundy. He had slept in the same bed with the

duke of Orleans, went to communion with him at the same mass, and signed a promise of inviolable friendship, at the same time that he had been long preparing to assassinate him. The crime was perpetrated the very next day after this ceremony had passed between them. Some satellites waited for their victim in a street through which he was to pass at night. They surrounded him, they knocked him down. 'I am the duke of Orleans,' cried the prince. 'So much the better,' replied the murderers; 'it was him we wanted.'

The duke of Burgundy was one of the first to testify his indignation at this murder; but the provost of Paris having reported to the council, that one of the murderers had taken refuge in that prince's hotel, he flew, disconcerted and trembling, to the duke of Berri, and drawing him aside, confessed his crime, saying, 'That the devil had surprised and tempted him.' The next day he went again to the council, but was not permitted to enter; upon which he took to flight, while fear dwelt on their minds, and that of the duke of Bourbon alone remained inflexibly bent on the punishment of the guilty. The only brother of the king assassinated, almost under his eyes, and his death to remain unpunished, was an event suited to that
age

age of horrors. What followed was no less fatal and astonishing. The duke of Burgundy, far from making the satisfaction which was demanded, dared to glory in his crime. He returned to Paris prepared for war; he entered it amidst the acclamations of the people, who sung carols before him, as at the entry of a sovereign. He got the permission of publicly making his apology. John Petit, a doctor of the university, who had been bought by the Burgundian, had the effrontery to pronounce a long discourse, in which, after having proved, by a dozen arguments, (in honour of the twelve apostles) that it was lawful for any one to kill a tyrant, he applied this maxim to the assassinated prince, imputing to him every crime which man can be guilty of. He concluded by saying, 'That the author of the assassination ought to be rewarded, by the example of the requital which was made to my lord St. Michael the archangel, for having killed the devil; and to the valiant man Phineas, who had killed Zimri.' Every word of this discourse tended to rebellion. There needed only a glimmering of reason and humanity to discover this absurd and execrable fanaticism: notwithstanding, no one dared contradict the doctor. The triumphant duke, furnished with letters of abolition,

which the king was obliged to give, marched against the people of Liege, who had made war on their bishop. The duke conquered, and returned with his victorious army. Meanwhile, the letters of abolition had been revoked, and the queen and dauphin had been intrusted with the government during the king's indisposition: but John Sans Peur had nothing to do but shew himself. The Parisians adored him, the court trembled at him; yet, as policy demanded some reparation for a crime, of which the remembrance could not be effaced, he consented to make an excuse purely out of ceremony, and confirmed, by this light submission, a power capable of overturning the kingdom. Master of the king's person, master of Paris, which he soon thought it not worth while to treat with respect, the more he grew in power, the more the hatred of the princes of the blood raised itself against his ambition. The young duke of Orleans, seconded by his father-in-law, the count of Armagnac, undertook to revenge the death of his father. He sent a challenge to the duke of Burgundy in these terms: ' Charles duke of Orleans, to
 ' thou John, who callest thyself duke of
 ' Burgundy, for the horrible homicide by
 ' thee and thy common assassins, traitor-
 ' ously

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 55

ously and wilfully committed on the person of our thrice renowned lord and father, &c.' France was divided between the Burgundians and Armagnacs. They fought in several places. The butchers of Paris, arming for John Sans Peur, signaled their sanguinary audacity against his enemies. Several of the principal inhabitants took to flight. The same disorder prevailed in the provinces; both parties shamefully intreating the assistance of the English; for public interest was nothing, when put in the balance against private pique. An accommodation seemed to have composed these feuds, and the English were sent back; but the fury of faction, and the insolence of the butchers, whom they called Cabochiens, who received that title from Caboche, the name of their chief; the machinations of a crowd of ambitious men, enemies to peace; above all, the character of the duke of Burgundy, who sacrificed every thing to the desire of dominion: these causes combined soon drove away all hopes of a calm. This prince formed a project to dethrone the king, which being discovered, gave the court and a part of the people, a sudden abhorrence of him. Those who before made him an idol, now looked on him as a traitor and homicide. He was declared

an enemy of the state; and Charles VI. marched in person against him. The duke, too feeble to resist a royal army, submitted to negotiate. His haughty soul stooped on this occasion. The peace was such as the court could have wished, or rather have hoped from two princes, who, under the appearance of union, eternally nourished the same sentiments of jealousy and hatred.

The French and English had often violated the truce made for twenty-eight years; but Henry IV. had gained no advantages from the calamities of France. Surrounded by domestic foes, he prudently employed himself in restraining their conspiracies. This prince being dead in 1413, his son Henry V. succeeded him; for whose lot it was reserved to shake the foundations of the French monarchy. The conditions of peace which he offered were so hard and shameful, that they were rejected with indignation. A menacing letter written to the king, in which Henry stiled him prince Charles, our cousin, and an adversary of France, served for a declaration of war. Henry embarked for Harfleur, besieged and took that city: not being able to undertake any thing more, because sickness had weakened his army, and his fleet had been dispersed by a tempest; he there-

therefore marched for Calais, where nothing was more easy than to have stopped his passage. An army of sixty thousand soldiers would have forced them to surrender, or perish with famine: but too much confidence often produces worse consequences than fear. They let him pass the Somme, and pursued him in the plain of Agincourt, preferring the risks of a battle to the advantage of conquering without one. The same faults which had been committed at Cressy and Poitiers produced the same disasters. Though the French were four times as many as the enemy, yet were they put to the rout. The advantage of the ground, the address of the English archers, the wisdom and courage of the young king of England, their desperate situation, which obliged them either to conquer or die, all concurred to make this victory strikingly glorious. Seven princes, and above eight thousand French gentlemen remained on the field of battle. The dukes of Orleans and Bourbon were taken prisoners. It is to the temerity of the people in command, and the ignorance of the constable d'Albert, we may attribute this public misfortune: they seemed to lead the army to slaughter. Henry V. repassed the sea, being in want both of money and troops: but France had

in her own bosom, enemies of the most dangerous kind; ambitious princes, and corrupted citizens.

The count d'Armagnac being appointed constable and superintendant of the finances, attempted to govern in a despotic manner. New impositions, new punishments! Every change in the ministry was a mortal stab to the kingdom: every step taken by the great tended to tear it in pieces. While the partizans of the duke of Burgundy were prescribed, he himself was in secret treaty with Henry V. whom he already acknowledged as king of France. The duke of Berri died: a prince cruelly avaricious, who had ruined the state, and who had never done any other good than that of building churches. Two dauphins died almost at the same time, and the count d'Armagnac, united with the new dauphin, (afterwards Charles VII.) seized on a treasure which queen Isabella of Bavaria had amassed at the expence of the nation. This princess lived at Vincennes in public infamy. The king surpris'd one of her lovers, and caused him to be drowned: they then conveyed her to Tours, and kept her prisoner. Isabella, who had, till then, been a declared enemy to the duke of Burgundy, now hesitated not to enter into a league with him against the

the state. The duke having released her from prison, she established a parliament at Troyes, whence she issued her orders in quality of regent; pretending that this title, which she had some time enjoyed, was not to be repealed. 'Now,' says Mr. Henault, 'every thing in France was double, parliaments, great officers,' &c. A traitor introduced the duke of Burgundy into Paris: his faction retook the upper part, and made a horrible massacre. The chancellor, the constable, several bishops, many magistrates, with innumerable citizens, were strangled. Others they threw from high towers on the pikes of the soldiers. The ancient Saxons could not have committed greater cruelty in a town taken by assault. It was thus that John Sans Peur chose to revenge himself. The common executioner was put at the head of the populace; the duke was seen to converse with him in the most amicable manner, and the executioner gave him his hand as a mark of friendship: a proof that the proudest men can sink into meanness when it serves their passions.

The dauphin had escaped, followed by a great part of the parliament, and was not willing to return into a city where the Burgundian was master. The provinces were the scenes of civil war. Henry V.

was the only one who reaped any advantage from these divisions : he seized upon Normandy : it was in vain that a legate used every argument in his power to instil into Henry's mind sentiments of peace. ' Is it not evident,' replied he, ' that God ' has conducted me hither by his own ' right hand ? there is no longer a king ' in France : I have a lawful claim on this ' kingdom : disorder reigns every where, ' and no one thinks of making a defence. ' Is not this a proof that heaven has destined the crown for my head.' Every fortunate usurper might use pretty nearly the same language, and the most atrocious crimes would be often looked on as the decrees of heaven, if we were to judge of the justice of actions by their success. The king of England, in his proposals of treaties, always rendered them impossible : they yielded much, and he exacted still more.

In the mean time, the duke of Burgundy reconciled himself with the dauphin. Their interview on the bridge of Montreau, which seemed to promise a lasting peace, gave occasion to a new crime, more fatal than the preceding ones. Scarce had the two princes met, each of them attended by ten knights, before John Sans Peur, the assassin of the duke of

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 61

of Orleans, fell covered with wounds. It is not possible to clear up this dreadful mystery. Whether the murder had been commanded by the dauphin, who was yet young and of a mild disposition, but easy, and too apt to be wrought on by others; whether the murderers had no other inducement than their own hatred, (which does not seem very likely) or whether a sudden quarrel had transported them out of themselves, such an event could not but produce strange effects. It was generally imputed to the dauphin. The queen gave herself up to the most unnatural and barbarous resentment: she joined herself with the young duke of Burgundy. The king of England found them at Troyes, where he made the famous treaty, by which it was decreed, that Henry V. should marry the daughter of Charles VI.; that after the death of the king, he should succeed to the crown, and, in the mean while, should govern France in quality of regent; that seeing the incapacity of Charles, he should, when he wrote to Henry, use these words: 'To our dear son, Henry king of England, and heir of France;' and that they should pursue Charles, who called himself dauphin, with all possible diligence and vigour, as an enemy to the state. This was violating the rights of nature,

ture, as well as those of the nation. It was overturning the fundamental laws of the kingdom; but it was the act of a weak king, who blindly followed the dictates of a furious woman. The false parliament which resided at Paris, (to which we cannot justly give any other name, since the ancient magistrates either were massacred, or were the greatest part fled with the dauphin, while the duke of Burgundy, in the name of the king, had put in other officers, devoted to his party). This unworthy parliament declared the dauphin guilty of *lese majeste* (and consequently incapable of succession), together with his accomplices, the murderers of the duke of Burgundy. The two kings, the queen, and the sons of John Sans Peur, had been received into the capital with an extraordinary magnificence. The court of Henry V. eclipsed every thing, and Charles VI. was abandoned. The proud Englishman demanded, one day, of the marshal of Isle Adam, who spoke to him with freedom, how he dared to look him in the face. ‘Most puissant lord,’ replied the marshal, ‘it is the manner of France; and he who dares not look the person in the face whom he is speaking to, is regarded as a bad man and a traitor.’ Some time after, this nobleman was conducted

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 63

ducted to the baſtile. Thus we ſee what the French got by ſubmitting to a foreign maſter.

In the miſt of this revolution, ſome citizens remained faithful to their country. The part beyond the Loire ſupported the cauſe of the dauphin : a number of nobles, ſome through zeal, others through policy, ranged themſelves under his colours. In quality of regent, he had removed the parliament and univerſity of Paris to Poitiers. Several magiſtrates, and many doctors attended them there, at the riſk of loſing their fortunes. Some advantages gained over the Engliſh reanimated their patriotic zeal ; but Henry's ſuperior ſtrength and judgment, would undoubtedly have reunited the two crowns on his own head, if a fiſtula, a diſorder which at that time they knew not how to cure, had not carried him off at Vincennes, at thirty-fix years of age. Charles VI. died two months after. Not one prince of the blood aſſiſted at his funeral. The people ſhed torrents of tears ; which ſhewed their feeling in pitying, and their juſtice in not attributing to him the public calamities. His ſurname of Well-beloved diſplays the idea which they had of his ſoul. There is a little anecdote which delineates the nobleneſs of his ſentiments : an in-
former

64 ELEMENS OF THE

former having accused a person of speaking ill of him : ' It cannot be,' replied the king, ' for I have done that man service.' This shews the excellence of his character; but at the same time tells us, he knew very little of the human heart, or he would not have believed men incapable of ingratitude. The son of Henry V. now in his cradle, was proclaimed king of England and France.

The thread of political affairs has made us take no notice of the great western schism, the termination of which was a memorable event in this reign. By a folly which could only have subsisted under the worst of governments, the kingdom was returned to acknowledge obedience to Peter de Lune, Benedict XIII. who continually promised to abdicate, and yet still persisted to retain the tiara. His obstinate ambition alienated their minds anew, and made them return to absolute neutrality. The popes of Rome, Boniface IX. Innocent VII. and Gregory XII. were no less untractable. On both sides, they affected as much zeal for peace, as they were distant, in reality, from making any concession; the only means by which they could procure it. The council of Pisa deposed Gregory and Benedict in 1409, and proclaimed Alexander V.; but the emperor, not

not willing to acknowledge this council, set up a third pope to dispute with the two others the spoils of the church. Alexander dying, they put in his place John XXIII. formerly a corsair, who very soon took arms, and exacted the tenths. At length the famous council of Constance assembled, to which that of Pisa gave rise. The emperor Sigismund, several princes of the empire, twenty-seven ambassadors from sovereigns, and a prodigious number of prelates and doctors, formed the most numerous assembly of this kind that had ever been seen. John XXIII. appeared there. He was looked on as the only lawful pope. They, nevertheless, obliged him to abdicate. He very soon repented of this step, and fled from Constance disguised like a postilion. Sigismund having arrested him, the council directed a process against him. This wretched pontiff, convicted of enormous crimes, was solemnly deposed, and the superiority of the general council over the popes confirmed by an immutable decree. There now remained only to give a successor to John. They elected Martin V. Gregory having sent his renunciation. Peter de Lune was obstinately bent not to give up; he therefore retired, and buried his dignity in a little fortress of Spain, situated on an inaccessible

sible rock. The punishment of John Hus, and Jerom of Prague, whom they burnt to death in spite of a pass from the emperor, because they maintained some opinions of Wickliffe, the English heretic, had excited violent declamations against the fathers of Constance. They had more respect for the memory of the cordelier, John Petit. It was not without great difficulty that the celebrated Gerson procured the condemnation of his apology for the duke of Burgundy, or rather the doctrine of homicide, which it contained; for they speak neither of the work nor its author. Several voices loudly demanded a reformation in the church. The exemptions, the annates, the reservations, the *gracia expectativas*; all these methods made use of by the popes to extend their jurisdiction, and increase their ecclesiastical revenues, furnished inexhaustible matter for complaints from the university, whose zeal, though perhaps guided by interest, demanded nothing more than was just. But reformation clashed with the selfish views of the principal members of the council. It ended in 1418, by the extinction of a fatal schism; leaving, however, great abuses unreformed, which had produced great evils. Men consecrated to God were then less than ever exempt from the weaknesses of

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 67

of humanity; and the spirit of the times opposed itself to the changes which were desired by a small number of wise and good men.

As we are now drawing towards the epocha of a revolution in manners and government, it is necessary to retrace a general picture of the sad state of monarchy. During the misfortunes of this reign, the court perpetually changed its face, and the public good was entirely sacrificed to the passions of those who possessed themselves of the sovereign power. Depredations in the finances, contempt of the laws, treasons, violence, and injustice, were the exploits by which the princes and nobles signalized their authority. The people of the army, licentious and undisciplined, were nothing more than highwaymen, who were more terrible to their country than its foreign enemies. Almost all the soldiers ranged themselves under the famous robber, named Aimerigot Black Head, who possessed several castles in the Limousin and Auvergne. His will is sufficient to let us into his character. 'I leave,' says he, 'to the chapel of St. George, for its reparations, fifteen hundred franks: item, to my Cram, who was faithful to me, twenty-five hundred franks: and the residue,' continued he, addressing

addressing himself to his officers, ‘ as you
 ‘ are companions, and ought to be bro-
 ‘ thers, take among you as common pro-
 ‘ perty; and if you cannot agree, but the
 ‘ devil will creep in among you, see here
 ‘ an ax very strong and well set, break the
 ‘ ark, (the strong box) and let every one
 ‘ get what he can.’

The people given up a prey to the rapacity of these barbarians, who often gave up their pay, that they might, with impunity, exercise their rapine; at the same time harassed with taxes, by which the great men and financiers were the only gainers, while the king was in want of the necessaries of life: the people, I say, made still more desperate by famine and contagious diseases, had lost all sentiments of patriotism and virtue; sometimes stupid under a weight of affliction, and sometimes furious in the heat of faction. The parliament, however, was a model of disinterestedness and frugality. The fees of the counsellors who were of the clergy were five-pence per day, and the laics had not ten-pence. This body of people enjoyed the respect which is inseparable from merit; but it yielded, for a time, to violence; and it would have been a singular prodigy, if many of its members had not been seized with this general delirium.

rium. The university likewise forgot its duty: that zeal for the public good with which it had often appeared animated, was now contaminated by a spirit of sedition and independence. Philip Augustus had exempted it from secular jurisdiction: a privilege which not only extended itself to the masters and scholars, but also to their servitors: eager to defend these injurious privileges, whenever they received the least check, they threatened to shut up the classes, and to suspend the lectures. The credit of that foundation, joined to the infinite number of its students, became a source of disorders. The doctors made the chair resound with sanguinary maxims and cruel invectives, though the chief part shewed a constancy to the laws of the state, and the principles of religion. Science was drowned in an ocean of errors, and a fondness for dispute filled the place of philosophy. Is it surprising that France, thus corrupt, agitated, and unhappy, should be now on the brink of ruin? Let us compare our situation with that of our ancestors, and be thankful to heaven.

Card-playing, which was hitherto but little known, began, under this reign, to be in fashion. It was a method made use of to amuse the king's melancholy. This invention, favourable to the lazy, is become pernicious.

pernicious to society, by discouraging bodily exercises, procuring to idle people a resource against the burden of time, and often plunging them into still greater evils; in fine, furnishing them with the means of ruining both health and fortune at one stroke. The actors likewise now first began to form themselves into companies: the gravest kind were called *Brothers of the Passions*, and represented the mysteries in a burlesque manner. Those of a lighter class were called *Care-killers*, and their chief, the king of the fools: these exhibited scenes of ridiculous fantastical adventures. There was another set called *Clerks of the Sock*, who began by allegorical moralities, and joined farces to them. There was also a fourth under the denomination of the *Cuckolds of Normandy*, under a chief whom they called the *Abbot of the Cuckolds*, and who bore a crozier and mitre; these acted pieces equally satirical and impertinent. The several theatres where these pieces were exhibited, became schools of superstition and the grossest indecency, and were indeed worthy of the taste and manners of the nation. It was the work of several ages to draw them out of so strange a barbarity. The French were not destitute of genius; but genius without cultivation produces nothing but monsters.

CHARLES VII.

THE kingdom was more unhappy after the death of Charles VI. than it had been after that of king John. A stranger reigned in the capital. The whole nation had taken the oath to the duke of Bedford, brother to Henry V. who was declared regent of France during the minority of Henry VI. The lawful king, whom they called Charles, the pretended dauphin, a prince of twenty, as weak as mild, as voluptuous as brave, governed by his ministers, preferred pleasure to the affairs which he ought to have pursued with ardour. Languedoc, Dauphiny, Auvergne, the Bourbonnois, Berri, Poitou, Xaintonge, Tourain, Orleans, and a part of Anjou, and of Maine, was the whole he was possessed of; the rest was in the hands of the English, whose alliance with the duke of Burgundy seemed to presage still more conquests, equally sudden and lasting. The duke of Brittany had embraced his cause, driven by the torrent against his own inclinations.

Charles VII. took some places; but the battle of Verneul, which Bedford gained, weakened him extremely. The French
temerity

temerity again shewed itself on this fatal day. So many misfortunes had not sufficiently taught the commanding officers: they knew how to fight, and yet neglected the means of vanquishing. A quarrel arising between the duke of Burgundy and the regent of France, gave the royalists time to breathe: they took advantage of it to negotiate an accommodation with the duke of Brittany. The count of Richmond his brother, accepted the sword of constable; but on condition that the king should disgrace his favourites. The monarch overwhelmed with adversity, forgetting his duty in the lap of pleasure, could not discard the ministers who, by their flatteries, abused his confidence. Those whom the constable dismissed were, in spite of him, replaced by others still less worthy of governing the king. The constable put two to death without considering the favour of his sovereign, who groaned under the tyranny of such a master, and the storms of his court increased the danger of his situation. Tremoille, his new favourite, very soon embroiled himself as well as Richmond, who was too absolute and too haughty, but zealous for the state. Friend and enemy, all conspired to the ruin of a monarch, who seemed not willing to reign. One day,
when

when he was employed in preparations for a feast, the brave La Hire came to take his orders. Charles having demanded what he thought of this feast: 'I think,' replied he, 'that no one can lose his kingdom more gaily.'

The siege of Orleans was likely to decide the fate of the monarchy. The English besieged this place with vigour: the French as vigorously defended it; but the king's courage was not to be raised by that; on the contrary, he thought of saving himself by retiring into Dauphiny. The remonstrances and prayers of the queen, Mary of Anjou, a princess of rare virtue, turned him from this cowardly resolution; and Agnes Sorrel, his mistress, reanimated his drooping courage. These lines of Francis I. are much for her honour.

'Gentle Agnes, thou meritest more honour by having recovered France, than is due for any thing that can be performed by a nun or a hermit, within the walls of a cloister or a cell.'

But Joan of Arc, so well known by the name of the Maid of Orleans, was the destined instrument for the preservation of her country. This girl, born of poor parents in a village in the diocese of Toul, was only seventeen when she appeared on

the scene of action; her devotion, her simplicity, a lively imagination heated by a frequent recital of the horrors of the war, rendered her very susceptible of those extraordinary feelings which agitated her soul, and threw her out of herself: she imagined herself inspired. ‘St. Michael, St. Margaret, and St. Catherine,’ she said, ‘all appeared to her in her ecstasies, to acquaint her with the decrees of God, which were, that she was to deliver Orleans, and to anoint the king at Rheims.’ Her vision went no farther. Raudricourt, the commander of Vaucouleurs, to whom she confided the secret, looked on her at first as a visionary. At length they presented her to the king, who had her examined. Prelates, doctors, and magistrates, all, after many interrogatories, acknowledged that there was something wonderful in this girl. She was herself strongly persuaded of success, and persuaded others to the same way of thinking. They resolved to take advantage of a resource so unexpected. The virgin, armed from head to foot, and a banner in her hand, conducted the French army as the substitute of God, and filled them with the same ardour and confidence with which she felt herself inspired. She fought like an heroine; but was scrupulous of taking away life. The English were struck
with

with a panic, and being continually beaten, they raised the siege of Orleans. It is natural to imagine, that the generals, as well as the soldiers, attributed this revolution to some supernatural cause. The duke of Bedford says, in one of his letters, 'That the virgin was a true disciple of Satan, and had made use of enchantments and witchcraft.' The same person who, to the French, appeared a tutelar angel, appeared to the English a magician; and though both might be mistaken, their opinions were not the less likely to produce a great effect upon credulous men.

Joan of Arc, after the deliverance of Orleans, pressed the king to come to Rheims to be anointed; to do which he was obliged to cross about fourscore leagues of land which were in the hands of his enemies, with a handful of men, and totally destitute both of money and provisions. These were dreadful obstacles; yet all was lost by the least appearance of irresolution. The authority of the virgin pushed on the most timid. The English were beaten at Patay, notwithstanding the heroic efforts of the famous Talbot their general. Auxerre refused to open its gates; but furnished them, nevertheless, with provisions. Troyes and Chalons

submitted, and Rheims received Charles VII. He was there anointed; at which ceremony (so much to her glory) the virgin assisted. After which, looking on her mission as accomplished, she was desirous of retiring; but the commands of the king, and persuasions of the court, detained her. Though they were jealous of her glory, yet they found her presence useful to them; but Heaven now seemed to abandon her all at once: wounded and taken prisoner, in a sally against the enemy in defence of Campaigne, which was assaulted by the duke of Burgundy, she was delivered to the English, who disgraced themselves by punishing her for their defeats. They ought to have treated her as a prisoner of war; on the contrary, they condemned her to be burnt as a forcerefs, an heretic, and an idolater. The Jacobine who performed the office of inquisitor at Paris, and the university in a body, through a scandalous fanatacism, solicited the English, in the warmest terms, to abandon her to the judgment of an ecclesiastical tribunal. Her enemies were but too much disposed to it. Cauchon, the bishop of Beauvais, their partizan, a man deserving of execration, with several other ecclesiastics and doctors, were the ministers of this barbarous injustice. The virgin made a reply which
is

is greatly celebrated, when she was interrogated why she had assisted at the anointing of Charles VII. with her standard: 'It is just,' says she, 'that the person who had a share in the labour, should also have a share in the honour.' The sentence was passed and executed at Rouen. It was one of the most scandalous monuments of the folly and wickedness of human nature. After several captious interrogatories, conformable to the genius of the inquisition, these cruel divines could not convince the heroine that her visions were illusive, or that she was not really inspired. We know, that a tribunal of priests could not condemn to death; but to abandon the heretic to the secular power, was to deliver her to the flames. The king afterwards did justice to the memory of Joan of Arc, who, as Voltaire observes, was sufficiently honoured even by her sufferings. The bastard of Orleans, that brave count of Dunois, who had almost always accompanied her, affirmed with oaths, in an advanced age, that all her actions had the appearance of something supernatural in them, and had never given occasion to the least reproach. It was, doubtless, only in so dark an age as what we are now writing of, that the virgin could have executed such things. France would have received

ceived the yoke, if their reason had been sufficiently strong to have disbelieved her revelations; but, in more enlightened times, they would have avoided the faults and misfortunes which rendered such a resource necessary.

Charles VII. beset by Tremoille, and by his mistresses, was lost in constant indolence. The courage of the nobility supplied his defect. The constable of Richmont lost not his zeal though in disgrace: he succoured Orleans in spite of all the commands of the court to the contrary. It is said, that when the virgin advised the driving him back, and the nobles, more prudent, determined to receive him as a friend, according to the history of Brittany, Richmont addressed her in these words: ‘Joan, they tell me that you have a mind to oppose me. I know not by whom you are sent, whether by God or by the devil; if by God, I have no reason to fear you, since God is privy to my intentions as well as yours; and if you are of the devil, my reason to fear you is still less.’

Whatever truth there may be in this curious anecdote, certain it is, that the constable ventured to seize Tremoille in a castle where the king himself had taken up his residence. He was the third minister

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 79

ster who had experienced his violence. Charles, who was now disgusted with this favourite, countenanced the undertaking, and received Richmond again into favour. In thus falling from his dignity through weakness, he had the happiness to gain himself an illustrious defender.

After some years of war, where fortune seemed equally to balance between the royalists and the English, without any decisive action which might be said to fix her, Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, rendered at length that superiority to the house of France, which his alliance with the enemies of the state had made them lose. The pride of the duke of Bedford wounded him in a lively manner. The assassination of his father had been too severely revenged by the misfortunes of the monarchy: his natural generosity interested him in the miseries of his countrymen. The council of Bale solicited him to sacrifice to his religion a cruel resentment. Peace could not be otherwise than advantageous to him, and what could he gain by depriving his own house of a crown in favour of a stranger? He embraced that side which he ought to have taken at first. The English having rejected the offers of the king, who had been willing to yield Normandy with Guienne, he

made his particular treaty at Arras, where the ambassadors of all the Christian princes were assembled. The strongest imposing conditions on the weakest. It is said of Charles VII. that he received the law from his vassal. He there discharged him from all future homage. He disavowed the murder of John Sans Peur, and promised to pursue the assassins. In a word, he yielded all that was required; happy, at that price, to purchase a peace so desirable. The queen-mother, Isabella of Bavaria, who had conspired with the duke of Burgundy the ruin of the king and the state, died this year at Paris, being ill used by the English, reduced to the last necessity, covered with shame, and devoted to grief: a faithless wife, an unnatural mother, an enemy of France: she is a most striking example of the misfortunes to which we expose ourselves, when we contemn those duties which we ought to observe.

The Parisians, much dissatisfied with the English dominion, of which they felt both the ignominy and rigour, were desirous of returning under their lawful sovereign. The constable treated of the terms of agreement betwixt them; in which he promised a general pardon, and the preservation of their privileges. This prevailed, and they opened the gate to him:
the

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 81

the English having no longer any partizans, were easily driven out. The king signalized himself at the taking of Montereau; he there began the attack like a soldier, and was one of the first who mounted the ramparts: it was exposing himself too much; but an action of this kind was, perhaps, necessary, to efface the remembrance of his indolence. It was twenty years since he had entered Paris. The people received him with triumph; and, in fine, determined, that his happiness should depend on his fidelity.

The disorders of every kind, which abounded, demanded quick redress. Charles gave his first attendance to ecclesiastical affairs. He assembled the clergy at Bourges: it was there that he made the celebrated pragmatic sanction, conformable to the decrees of the council of Bale, which then endeavoured to limit the power of the popes, and to re-establish the liberty of the church. By this pragmatic sanction, they abolished reserves, expectatives, annates; which were the rights the popes arrogated of reserving to themselves the collations of a crowd of benefices, of naming successors before they were vacant, and of receiving a year's revenue: they renewed, with great alacrity, the ancient custom of elections, which inducted the

clergy with the royal consent; they suppressed the abuse of appealing to the pope, without having recourse to the ordinary courts of justice; and in cases where appeals were lawful, they obliged the pope to appoint commissaries in their own kingdom: in fine, the superiority of general councils over the pontiffs were authentically acknowledged. The parliaments, known by the name of the pragmatic, were as odious to the court of Rome, as they were dear to the French. It was not possible to reconcile such different interests. The quarrel of the council of Bale with Eugene IV. the deposition of that pope, the schism which it occasioned for some years, properly belongs to ecclesiastical history: let us only observe, that this council, after having made such wise regulations, degenerated into a conventicle; which passionately pursued a lawful pontiff who was worthy of being the head of the church, and which abused that authority by which it had set bounds to the pontifical power. When things are at the worst, they generally mend; but rarely without violent convulsions and dangerous struggles.

There was nothing of more importance to be done than restraining the soldiery, who ruined the people by their pillages. Charles lessened their number, regulated their pay,
and

and established military discipline. The same reformation was necessary to restrain the rapacity of the officers, as there was to set bounds to the licentiousness of the soldiers. Several nobles formed a party: the duke of Alençon breathed into the dauphin (afterwards Lewis XI.) sentiments of rebellion, to which he seemed by nature too prone. That young prince appeared at the head of the factious. The count of Dunois, jealous of the constable, forgot his duty, but very soon repented it, and returned to his master, who shewed, by his conduct, that a great man should forgive faults which are not persisted in. The vigour with which they pursued the rebels soon stopped the course of their enterprises. Lewis sued for pardon, and obtained it; but afterwards threatened to return, if pardon was not granted to Tremoille, and some other of his partizans. 'The doors are open,' says the king to him, 'and if they are not wide enough, I will throw down twenty fathoms of the wall to make way for you: go, we shall find princes of our own blood who will serve us better than you have done.' The dauphin deserved this reprimand: he was silent, and did not attempt to depart at that time.

Among an infinity of melancholy objects, history here presents us with an instance of generosity worthy of the most refined age: the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, stifling the hatred which divided his house and that of Orleans, delivered the duke who bore that title, and who had been prisoner in England from the battle of Agincourt; not satisfied with paying his ransom and being his benefactor, he became likewise his friend. This opulent, magnificent, delightful prince, the institutor of the order of the golden fleece, distinguished himself among the princes, his contemporaries, less by his power and riches than by the true merit of doing good.

Charles marched at the head of his troops, and supported his superiority over the English. He took Pantoise by assault, which Talbot in vain endeavoured to succour. An uniform detail of other expeditions would be tedious and useless. The contending parties had often entered on the negotiations of a peace; but could produce only a truce, during which the king executed his project of reforming the military. He raised fifteen companies of ordnance, every one having a hundred fighting men, and each six horses. At the same time, he established a body of archers, in number four thousand (muskets not being then

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 85

then much in use, and bows continuing to be so). These troops were always to be under colours. In disbanding the remainder of the militia, there was particular care taken to make artificers or labourers of them, to prevent their turning to banditti. The principal cities and countries surrounding them, were at first charged with furnishing a support to the soldiers which were quartered upon them: but, if we may believe Mezerai, (who is a little suspected in many affairs) the people, always affected with the present evil, and careless of what was to come, preferred a tax in money for the payment of the troops, without considering, that when it was once established, it would no longer depend on them, either for duration or increase. I will not examine the justice of this sentiment. It is very certain, that the perpetual tolls * were then established for the maintenance of the soldiers. Monarchy gained nothing more by this than a regular militia subsisting on its vassals. The people might be said to gain much, being no longer exposed to the intolerable vexations of these robbers; for they deserved

* The ancient taxes were so called, because the collectors marked on a little wooden tally whatever they received of the contributors; the art of writing not being then very common.

no better name. However, royal authority was certainly strengthened by reformation; the country was repeopled, commerce again began to flourish, and there was no longer any fear of being robbed or murdered by those who should have been the defenders of their properties. The remainder of the taxes became perpetual under this reign, which amounts to nine millions of our present current coin.

Besides the companies of ordnance, every village was to furnish a free archer exempt from tally; which, altogether, formed a body of troops sufficiently numerous to defend the state. The English, weakened by many losses, deprived of the duke of Bedford, one of the greatest men of his age, divided at London by court intrigues, were, nevertheless, intractable. They broke the truce, by ravaging a town belonging to the duke of Brittany, who was sincerely attached to the king. This imprudence, heightened by an air of haughtiness, cost them dear. All Normandy was soon after in the hands of the French.

James Cœur, who had enriched himself by commerce, perhaps contributed more than the courage of the warriors to so important a conquest. The money which he furnished Charles with, enabled him to undertake and to execute. A few years after,

this

this famous merchant becoming minister of the finances, under the title of treasurer to the king, was condemned to exile, and loss of his possessions. Such is sometimes the recompence of services.

The greatest part of the world believed that he fell a victim to jealousy. Mr. Villaret leaves some doubt of his innocence, and gives reason to think, that part of the finances of the state had swelled his treasury : but he at the same time confesses, that the commissaries employed in this process were willing to find him guilty. Indeed their conduct shewed more passion than equity ; besides that, they shared among themselves the spoils of his estate. Supposing him culpable of some transgressions, (for it was plainly proved, that he was not guilty of poisoning Agnes Sorrel) we may yet reckon him amongst the illustrious victims of ingratitude and envy. A particular worth remarking is, that in his process the privileges of the clergy were restrained. ‘ A species of preservation,’ says Mr. Villerette, ‘ which was always assumed with precaution ; but which, in France, was never able to abridge the course of justice.’ Guienne was retaken in less time than Normandy. The English re-entered it only to be driven out a second time. General Talbot, whom they called

called their Achilles, lost his life in battle. Bordeaux and other places submitted, and were no more under the dominion of the English. There remained now in the hands of the enemy, no other places in the kingdom than Calais and Guienne. The kings of England have, nevertheless, assumed to themselves the title of kings of France. Might not the king of France, with the same right, have taken that of king of England, from the reign of Philip the August? This hopeless revolution, under a prince who too much neglected business for pleasure, was not only the effect of the wisdom of the generals, of the courage of the nobles, of the discipline established among the troops, of the good order which they now kept in their finances, of the troubles of England, where the house of York disputed the throne with that of Lancaster; but still more of the zeal of the French nation, taught by its mistakes and its misfortunes; impatient of submitting to a fatal yoke which it had given itself, and more faithful in supporting the cause of the state, than it had been careless in suffering it to be betrayed. Nothing more disturbed the happiness of Charles VII. than the conduct of the dauphin. This young prince, full of wit and valour, already celebrated for his

his exploits, tarnished all his good qualities by the fierceness and turbulence of his character. In the year 1446, he had retired from the court discontented with the king and his ministers, and enraged against Agnes Sorrel, who indeed enjoyed the greatest favour, but who, it must be confessed, had made use of it for the good of the state. No consideration could induce him to return. He had married, without the consent of his father, a daughter of the duke of Savoy. He governed Dauphiny as a sovereign. Knowing that the king would be desirous of securing his person, he asked an asylum of Philip the Good, and retired into Brabant, where he lived in moderate tranquillity. The duke of Alençon, a prince of the blood, guilty of the same revolt with the dauphin, still held a treaty with the English. Charles resolved to extinguish, by a just severity, these first glimmerings of faction: he proceeded against the duke as a traitor, and changed the condemnation of death to perpetual imprisonment. He proposed this question to parliament, If the king could assist at the judgment of a law-suit entered against a peer of France? They replied, That he not only could, but that his presence was absolutely necessary. The decision was carried according to ancient custom:

custom : ‘ A custom,’ says Mr. de Voltaire, ‘ which has appeared since unworthy of ‘ royal majesty, since the presence of the ‘ sovereign seemed to constrain suffrages ; ‘ and, in a criminal affair, the same presence which ought to announce nothing ‘ but mercy, commanded rigour.’ Meanwhile the duke of Brittany languished in a disorder which defied the force of medicine. Their ignorance made them believe that he was bewitched, and some advised sending for magicians to dissolve the charm. He himself opposed it, saying, ‘ That he ‘ chose rather to die by the hands of God, ‘ than those of the devil.’ By his death the inheritance of Brittany passed to a brother of the constable of Richmond. This great captain preserved the dignity of constable ; ‘ because that he was willing,’ he said, ‘ to honour, in his old age, a ‘ place, which had honoured him in his ‘ youth.’ He did homage to the king, such as he had done to his predecessors, declaring, that it was not a Lege-homage. Charles VII. full of acknowledgment, believed that he ought to recal him to it. France and Brittany very soon afterwards lost Richmond. Though the duke of Burgundy, in receiving his estates through the generosity of the dauphin, had wisely observed the regards due to a sovereign ;
yet

yet reciprocal complaints announced an approaching rupture, which would, perhaps, have broken out, if the king had lived much longer. Fear and chagrin caused his death. He had been persuaded, that the dauphin had a design of poisoning him. This idea troubled him to such a degree, that he obstinately, for several days, refused all nourishment. He died at the age of sixty. Father Daniel insists upon it, that it is doing an injury to Charles VII. not to look on him as one of our greatest kings.' Mr. Hainault, nevertheless, assures us, that he was only a witness to the wonders of his reign. ' They say,' added he, ' that fortune, in despite of the monarch's indifference, and for the sake of doing something singular, chose rather to give him, at that time, powerful enemies and valiant defenders. It was not that he had a vast deal of courage, but if he did appear at the head of his armies, it was as a warrior and not as a chief. The greatest part of his life was employed in gallantry and feasts.' Are not these reproaches exaggerated? He certainly became, in a manner, another man when he began to enjoy his power; few kings have governed with more wisdom, and laboured with more success for the happiness of the nation: he was then adored;

adored ; a circumstance which has not happened to many good princes. A contemporary author bears testimony of his assiduity in council, and his application to business. Supposing him of a middling capacity, we ought at least to acknowledge his merit in the judgment he shewed, by bestowing his confidence on great men, who seconded his views. He knew how to recompence services by the infallible means of exciting emulation. But if Agnes Sorrel had not loved the state as well as she loved the monarch, Richmond and Dunois would, perhaps, have miscarried in their enterprises. A mistress of Charles's shared the glory of his reign, while Mary of Anjou, his wife, was reduced to the obscure merit of patiently suffering the infidelity of her husband. Printing was invented in Germany towards the middle of this century. Those who brought to Paris the first printed books, passed for magicians ; for they ascribed every thing to the power of magic.

It is unnecessary to make reflections on the ignorance of these times ; for it is less astonishing than the prodigies of the virgin, and the absurd process which condemned her to the flames. Some persons of the highest rank knew something of the value of letters, and esteemed those who understood

stood them. Margaret of Scotland, first wife of Lewis XI. having one day found the learned Allen Chartier asleep, gave him a kiss. The extreme ugliness of Chartier increased the surprise of the spectators: she perceived it—‘I do not,’ says she, ‘kiss the person but the mouth, from whence has proceeded such fine things.’ These fine discourses, then so much admired, are written in an uncouth stile, and with an ill-taste. The university at this time reckoned twenty-five thousand students, the greatest part of whom learned nothing more than bad Latin and vain subtilties. Charles VII. reformed a part of the abuse, which once rendered this body as dangerous as we now see it useful. In restraining its privileges, he submitted it to the laws. They abrogated a ridiculous statute which excluded married men from the practice of physic; as if the clerks could alone teach an art, which it was not lawful to make use of. In spite of the luxury and extravagance of the modes of this time, they were so ignorant of the conveniencies of life, that during the hard winter in 1457, the lords and ladies of quality, who did not dare to mount a horse, were drawn along in a tub.

LEWIS XI.

THE character of Lewis XI. was sufficiently known for them to expect a governor cruel, absolute, and whimsical. He began by effecting a conduct entirely opposite to that of Charles VII. The court-rolls were almost entirely renewed; the duke of Alençon and the count of Armagnac, justly condemned under the late reign for unpardonable crimes, again appeared. The ministry and the people very soon found out, that the system of the new king was to govern with an absolute empire; and that he would not be scrupulous of the means of increasing his authority. Pius V. Eneas Silvius, who being secretary of the council of Bael, had shewn the most ardent zeal in defending the liberties of the church; but who, afterwards becoming cardinal and pope, had publicly changed his opinion, as his interest directed; a man formed with finesse sufficient to deceive Lewis XI. offered, at a certain price, to abolish the pragmatic sanction. It was the king's interest to support this work of his predecessor; but in the hope of replacing the house of Anjou on the throne of Naples, now usurped
by

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 95

by Ferdinand of Arragon, he sacrificed to the pope one of the most precious laws of France, though odious to the court of Rome. He afterwards insisted on the rights of the house of Anjou. Pius V. supported Ferdinand, and having obtained that which he wished, made no other acknowledgment than eulogiums. The parliament had courageously opposed the abolishment of the pragmatic sanction, which they looked on as the rampart of the Gallic church. Lewis XI. permitted the execution of it still to them, excepting some points: he could not better revenge himself on the artifices of the pope. The parliament, excommunicated on this account, despised his censures, and, by that means, rendered them useless. This event was one of the pretences which the principal lords seized on to league themselves against the king. The more he endeavoured to disgrace the great men, whose power gave him umbrage, the more he drew on himself their hatred. The duke of Burgundy sent to him Chimai to complain of the several infringements of the treaty of Arras. Lewis, in a fit of humour, demanded of Chimai, If the duke was made of any other metal than other princes? 'He must be made of good metal,' replied the ambassador, 'since
' he

‘ he received and protected you when no
‘ other person dared do it.’ Philip the Good
was too pacific to disturb the repose of the
state; but Charles, the count of Charalois,
impetuous and violent, and bearing a
mortal hatred to the king, sought occasion
to break out. The duke of Brittany
likewise discontented, because his unjust
pretensions had been opposed, excited this
young prince to rebellion. They drew
into their party the duke of Bourbon, and
afterwards the duke of Berri, the king’s
brother, dangerous through the weakness
of his mind, which rendered him supple
to the impressions of the cabal all at once.
These rebels openly declared themselves,
under the common pretext of reforming
the state, and supporting the rights of the
people, covering their ambitious designs
under the specious name of a league for
the public good. The famous Dunois en-
tered into this league. How little would it
have been capable of doing, under an equi-
table government, and how unhappy are
bad princes in furnishing pretences of rebel-
lion to those who are the chief supports of
their throne! They armed on all sides.
The king took such good measures, that
the count of Charalois in vain attempted
to surprise the capital: the army of France
and that of the Burgundians met near
Mont-

Montlheri, where they fought a bloody battle. Lewis and the count equally signalized their bravery, without being able to decide the victory. The rebels besieged Paris, but very soon despaired of entering: nevertheless, the king followed the counsel of Francis S'force, duke of Milan, who advised him that, in order to dissipate the league, he ought to promise every thing, and afterwards judge whether his circumstances would oblige him to keep his promises; a maxim too conformable to his political artifice. He then signed a deceitful treaty, by which he yielded the sovereignty of Normandy to his brother, and the dominion of several other places to the principal chiefs. They afterwards talked of the public good, without any other effect, than that of gaining less to the people. The event of this league made it be afterwards justly stiled the league of public evil.

The following quarrels between the dukes of Berri and Britanny, furnished to the king an occasion of breaking the treaty; at the same time that he negociated with the Britons, he raised Normandy against his brother. Always embroiled in troubles and disputes, despoiling some of their fortunes, making informations against others; he every day increased the discontent of the

nobles ; but he knew how to prevent their enterprises, by dividing them. To justify his conduct with regard to the duke of Berri, he resolved to convoke the states, and to refer to their decision so important an affair ; persuaded that they would maintain the rights of the crown. He was not mistaken in his confidence; the states declared, that Normandy was inseparably united to the crown; and that the king had a right of holding it to himself from the declaration of Charles V. which fixed the apenage of the children of France to twelve thousand livres a year, to be raised on lands which were erected into a dutchy or county ; but that having given the king's brother, Charles duke of Berri, no less than sixty thousand livres, agreed he should be requested to insert a clause in the grant, to prevent its being made a precedent. They promised him all kind of succour in case of war : and this assembly was a proof of the great zeal they had for their sovereign. Philip the Good having died the preceding year, the count of Charalois, Charles the Rash, his son and successor, an irreconcilable enemy to Lewis, prepared himself for new hostilities. The king reckoning more on his policy than his arms, always preferred negotiations to battles. His confidence in the cardinal

of

of Balue bishop of Evreux, whose perfidy he very soon experienced, made him take an imprudent step, which had like to have lost him; while his ambassadors were endeavouring to support the people of Liege against the new duke of Burgundy. Balue persuaded him to have a meeting with that prince in the valley of Peronne, accompanied only by some noblemen: as soon as he had arrived there, they learned the revolt of the people of Liege; Lewis did not imagine it was so near, but his agents were but too well assured of it, before they were apprised of the interview. At this news the duke, transported with fury, and master of the person of the king, all at once took the most violent resolution. At length, from the safe counsels of Calmont, he exacted of Lewis, that he should assist him against the people of Leige. Lewis had every thing to fear and nothing to refuse. He accompanied his vassal; he became the minister of his vengeance. Liege was overcome; the duke set it on fire, and justified the rebels, in some degree, by his barbarous cruelty. The king was desirous of making terms with his brother, as he had with the Burgundian: he offered him Guienne for an apenage, and persuaded him to marry Isabella the sister and heiress of the king of Castile. Mean-

while, the man whom he placed most confidence in, took every measure to break his schemes. It was the cardinal Balue, a person born in the lowest station, raised through his suppleness, without virtue, without breeding, and to whom, according to the observation of the ingenious Mr. Duclos, there was only hypocrisy wanting to make up every vice. He had purchased the purple robe, by obtaining letters patent to abolish entirely the pragmatic sanction; letters which the parliament refused to in-roll. He forgot the duties of his own function, to review the troops in the habit of a bishop, which gave occasion for a nobleman to say to the king: ‘Sir, I beg that you would send me to Evreux to ordain priests, since the bishop is come here to review soldiers.’ United to the bishop of Verdun by a conformity of character and interest, Balue deceived the master whose sole favour he possessed. One of their letters discovered their perfidy. Lewis had them arrested, and inclosed in iron cages invented by the bishop of Verdun. They ought to have been prosecuted according to the laws of France; but the opposition of the pope, though strongly opposed by the king’s ambassadors, stopped the course of this affair, and the guilty were released from prison.

The

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 101

The duke of Berri accepted of the apenage which was offered him; but Isabella of Castile married Ferdinand of Arragon, who became master of Spain by this marriage. The two brothers still disputed on several articles: the death of the new duke of Guienne terminated the difference. He was, it was said, poisoned by a monk, his confessor. It was but little doubted in Europe that Lewis had been the instigator of this crime, who, when he was dauphin, had been feared as a parricide by his father. History ought not to accuse him without proofs; but it must be allowed to complain of his having deserved such a suspicion. Give me leave also to observe, that a prince, culpable of avowed guilt, is himself blameable for the rash judgments which people will naturally form on all his actions. Mr. de Voltaire, from whom I print this remark, makes it a truly useful lesson, both to rash accusers of the great, and to the great themselves, that they may not, by their conduct, provoke such censure. Nobody contributed more than the duke of Burgundy to spread these suspicions, through his own fiery disposition, his hatred for the king, and their mutual vengeance against each other. Having very soon broken the peace of Peronne, he published in a manifesto, that Lewis de-

signed to murder his brother by evil practices, poison and witchcraft; that he was a parricide, a heretic, and an idolater; and that all the princes of Europe ought to unite against him. This king, whom they proclaimed as an idolater and heretic, (accusations contradictory to each other) was, in fact, a devout zealot for religion; and such absurdity equally proves the injustice, the hatred, and the ignorance which then reigned.

Charles the Rash again took to arms, and made war in a furious manner. He besieged Beauvais. The troubles of England had, for a long while, freed France from the invasions of its most powerful enemies. Henry VI. was dethroned, re-established after a long imprisonment, vanquished anew, and massacred with his son, by the orders of Edward IV. chief of the house of York: which prince was no sooner possessed of a crown soiled with blood, than he renewed his ancient pretensions. Edward threatened Lewis to invade France, if he did not restore Normandy and Guienne. ‘Tell your master ‘I will not be counselled by him,’ said the king to his herald. This answer seemed to imply a kind of resolution for fighting; but Lewis, according to his old maxims, embarrassed the enemy without
hazarding

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 103

hazarding any thing himself. Seeing the English in the kingdom, he negociated with Edward: he promised to pay him fifty thousand crowns a year, and influenced his principal officers to force on him presents and careffes. Happily the duke of Burgundy, being at war with the duke of Lorraine, had not seconded the enemies, though he had solicited them to this undertaking in a very lively manner. With a formidable army, they might have over-run France; but intrigue and money preserved the king at the expence of his glory. The Burgundian now deprived of his alliance with the English, made a new treaty with his sovereign. Never were conventions and oaths made with so little truth. An illustrious victim was now sacrificed to the severe justice of the monarch. It was the constable, St. Paul, his brother-in-law, who had been betrayed, outraged, and thrown on the side of the duke of Burgundy, who then abandoned him. His prosecution was carried on with rigour, and he died on a scaffold. Lewis XI. in order to restrain the great, was determined to sacrifice the heads of the state. The count of Armagnac and the duke of Alençon, condemned under Charles VII. and re-established in the beginning of this reign, had already submitted to punish-

ment for their new rebellion. We afterwards see, in 1477, the duke of Namur, of the house of Armagnac, die at the place of execution at Paris, after having been put to torture, and his children drawn under the scaffold, by order of the king, to be bathed in the blood of their father. Horrible cruelty! more likely to make him hated as a tyrant than respected as a monarch.

Charles the Rash could not live in repose, nor set any bounds to his ambition: imprudence and fury precipitated him to extremes. For a long time he had been animated against the Swiss; whether it was because they were allied to Lewis, or whether it was to subject them to himself, he made a most frivolous pretence for attacking them. This warlike nation having shook off the yoke of the house of Austria in 1037, and preserved its liberty by prodigies of constancy and valour, always ready to defend itself; but desirous of being at peace with its neighbours, was forced to arm against the duke. It was represented to him, that the bridles of his horses were of more value than all Switzerland. Deaf to all prayers and reasons, he made a campaign against them: the Swiss beat him in a defile; all his baggage fell into their hands. Such was the simplicity
of

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 105

of this people, that the silver vessel which the duke used to drink out of, was sold as a vessel of pewter; and his richest diamond, which would now be esteemed at eighteen hundred thousand livres, was sold for a florin, and went through many hands at the same price. This battle of Granfon irritated the fury of Charles, without curing him of his imprudence. He very soon lost a second at Morat, where the duke of Lorraine fought with the Swiss the following year. He was again defeated under the walls of Nancy. It was there that this wretched prince perished. There were few who equalled him in riches and power; but those things which would have made him happy were ever wanting, moderation and wisdom. He was always a torment to himself, by being the scourge of the world. The king did not dissemble the joy which these events caused him. His last treaty with the duke had not hindered him from proposing a case of conscience, which displayed his little integrity; it was to know if he could, according to the laws of God and his conscience, permit, suffer, or tolerate, any princes, lords, or communities, who had or should have a quarrel with the duke of Burgundy, and whether, if they made war on him, he should indemnify them. Two princes,

who engaged by oath to serve for each other against all adversaries, at the same time mutually practised the contrary; it was nevertheless decided, that the duke having always shewn a respect for the king and kingdom, the king should leave other princes to act, and at the same time give them to understand, that if they would make war on the duke of Burgundy, he should be satisfied, and would never oppose them; but that he would neither solicit or give them any succours. It is a doubt which is most to be wondered at, the scruples which the king sought in order to violate his promise, and at the same time to quiet his conscience, or the iniquity of the casuists, who subtilly managed the means. To ask advice in a matter of this kind, is to be before-hand a prevaricator: but there never was a time, in which the secret of accommodating morals to the passions of the great was not known.

Maria of Burgundy being the only heir to Charles, a part of his estates were of right to return to the crown. The king lost not an instant; he sent troops and ambassadors to all parts. Burgundy submitted without resistance; but Flanders and Artois declared for the princess. The world in general reproach Lewis with not
having

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 107

having married her to the dauphin. Nothing could have been more advantageous: he wished this marriage to take place. Maria was not at first averse to it, though the dauphin was but seven years old, and she near twenty; but a false step of the king made her reject him, and redoubled the aversion of the Flemings; so true it is, that finesse is often opposite to good policy. Maximilian of Austria, son of the emperor Frederick III. was preferred; a fatal event, which produced above two ages of war and destruction. The husband of the heiress of Burgundy of necessity became the enemy of France; as soon as he was married he took to arms. He was as yet but weak, and Lewis not loving war, a truce suspended hostilities. This cunning monarch, who appeared to be carried away entirely by his interest, shewed himself truly generous in supporting the oppressed against a violent and vindictive pope. The Medicis governed Florence: enriched by their commerce, happy through the courtesy of their manners, jealousy formed against them a horrible conspiracy, in which Sextus IV. had but too much part, and of which the chief was Salviati archbishop of Pisa. Laurence and Julian, grandsons of the great Come of Medicis, were attacked in the church during mass;

the youngest died on the spot, the other escaped from these murders. The people very soon revenged him and became his benefactors. The archbishop of Pisa was hanged on a window. This was, for the pope, a most specious pretext to give himself up to the most cruel resentment; he carried it to the utmost excess. The Florentines implored the succours of Lewis: his ambassadors spoke strongly to Sextus, who affected to treat the family of the Medicis as merchants. 'They were,' he said, 'of the lowest extraction.' In spite of all the turns of the policy of Rome, the king forbid all commerce with that court; and called together a national council to renew the pragmatic sanction. The pope, not being very strong, made peace with the republic of Florence, withdrawing excommunications, and foreseeing all the consequences of this affair. Lewis, on his side, was going to sign, with the king of England, a truce, which was to last a hundred years after their death, when Maximilian of Austria, though disappointed of the aid which he had expected from the English, broke the truce which had been concluded the preceding year. They took the French county in one campaign; they fought in Artois with a loss pretty equal on both sides. Truces and hostilities

succeed.

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 109

succeeded each other in an infinite number, till the death of Maria of Burgundy in 1482. This unforeseen event changed the face of affairs. The indocile Artois, less submissive still to a stranger than to their natural princes, seized on two children which she had had by Maximilian, forcing them to conclude the treaty of Arras with Lewis, by which they gave in marriage to the dauphin Margaret, daughter to the late princess, who was to have Artois and the French county for her dowry. This princess was carried into the kingdom, but the marriage never was concluded; in like manner as we see under the reign of Charles VIII. that the daughter of Edward IV. was promised to the dauphin. The chagrin of seeing herself deceived, cut short her days.

The last years of the king were employed in the same turbulence and intrigues which had filled his whole reign: worn out by sickness, he was not less jealous of his authority, and more attentive to business; the fear of death, nevertheless, terrified his soul. A legate had address sufficient to give him scruples on the detaining of the cardinal Balue and the bishop of Verdun. The bishop obtained his liberty, the cardinal was put into the hands of the legate, under promise that he should be punished

at

at Rome, where he received nothing but honour: how strange, when bishops less culpable than he, had perished on the scaffold! While the king lost strength from day to day, fortune increased his dominions. The last prince of the house of Anjou left him Provence by will, with his claim on the kingdom of Naples and Sicily. Provence was very soon reunited to the crown; and Lewis was too circumspect to spread his ambition further: the conquest of a foreign kingdom appeared to him as vain as dangerous. His successor thought otherwise, and had reason to repent of it. This prince, so powerful, became a prey to suspicion, at the approach of death, fearing his own son, changing his domestics daily, giving continual orders for fresh executions, and was at the same time a slave to a physician both rapacious and insolent, who threatened to abandon him, and who dared to say to him, 'I know, that some morning you will send me away as you have done others; but I swear by God, that you will not live eight days afterwards.' The king, on this, redoubled his devotions: he loaded his pockets with relics; he bought a little image, which cost one hundred and sixty livres, was profuse in his presents to churches and monks, in the hopes of preserving himself. St. Francis, of Paul, a hermit

HISTORY OF FRANCE. III

hermit of Calabre, was sent for from the midst of Italy to his assistance: he came, the king threw himself at his feet, humbly conjuring him to cure him. Francis endeavoured to dispose him for death, and to change his superstition into virtue; but Lewis's fear of the loss of life was stronger than his desire to die like a Christian. Always usurping arbitrary power, always inspiring terror by his cruelties, he at length died at the age of sixty.

We shall relate some particulars of him equally useful and curious. Lewis XI. affected in his dress a sordid and indecent simplicity. In an interview between him and the king of Castile in 1463, he appeared in a habit of coarse cloth, his head covered with an old hat ornamented with a leaden figure of our lady; while the Castilian sparkled with the greatest magnificence. This contrast made him despicable in the eyes of the Spaniards; but he had gained their ministers by bribery, and assured himself of success in his designs. The chief expence of his household was for his table; from twelve thousand livres he carried it to thirty-seven: he not only invited the lords of his court to eat with him, in order to attach them the more strongly to him, but even strangers from whom he could gather any thing: sometimes merchants; for he gave a particular

cular attention to commerce. A merchant named Master John, flattered by this distinction, determined to ask of him letters of nobility: the king granted them; but from that time took no further notice of him. Master John testified his surprise: 'Go, Mr. Gentleman,' said Lewis to him, 'when I made you sit down at my table, I looked on you as the first of your class; you are now the last, and it would be an injury to others if I still did you the same favour.' An excellent lesson this for those who prefer vain titles to personal merit. He was often seen to mix with the citizens, and, to inform himself of their affairs, had his name inscribed in the companies of the artizans. His answer which he made when he was reproached with not supporting his dignity, was this, 'When pride goes before, shame and misfortune follow very near.' A desire of keeping people of high birth under subjection, (which was a principal object of his policy) was, without doubt, a reason why he preferred those who were low born to offices, that he might destroy them by a word. He had the address, according to the expression of Francis I. of raising pages above kings: but this was more owing to his cruelty than any other method; and he sometimes severely proved how dangerous

ous it was to give his confidence to mean and base souls, who were capable of intrigue and destitute of honour, and who flattered him only to deceive him. He was often mistaken in his finesse. It was a frequent expression with him, that he who knew not how to dissemble, knew not how to reign. 'If,' says he, 'my hat was conscious of my secret, I would burn it.' By repeating too often this maxim, he, according to the remark of Mr. Duclos, lost the fruit of it. We cannot think without horror of the cruel executions which provost Tristan the hermit (who was honoured with his friendship) performed by his orders; of the iron cages, enormous chains, and the most cruel tortures, which became so common in the last years of his reign. Tyranny can never be allied with true grandeur; however, this piece of justice must be rendered him, that he made every one fulfil the duties of his office. Having one day taken a review of the officers of his household, and finding the equipages not in good order, he distributed to each of them escrutores, saying, 'since they would not serve him with their arms, they should with their pens.' This kind of correction had more effect on them than the odious cruelties which he sometimes used.

He

He would have deserved commendation for preferring treaties to war, if it had not been his constant system to deceive in negotiations. It must, however, be confessed, that he shewed real prudence in always carefully avoiding quarrels at a distance. Genoa having submitted itself to France under Charles VI. this unsteady people, after frequent rebellions, again offered to acknowledge Lewis XI. for their sovereign. He replied, 'You give yourselves to me, and I give you to the devil.' The continual infidelity of the Genoese justifies this answer. When we consider, that this perjured and wicked prince was the first of our kings who always bore the title of Most Christian; when we see him delivering himself to all the practices of a popular devotion, making pilgrimages, wearing in his cap images of pewter and lead, giving the county of Boulogne to the Holy Virgin, demanding of the pope the right of assisting at the holy office with surplice and amess, establishing the custom of reciting the angelus at mid-day, &c. we know not how to reconcile so many marks of religion with so many vices, which humanity shrinks from; but we often see in nature strange contrasts. He had an odd-turned mind, and a bad heart. 'This oddity,' says Father Daniel, 'made him neglect

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 115

‘ neglect the essential part of devotion, and
‘ content himself with exterior practices.
‘ It rendered him scrupulous in trifles, when
‘ he hesitated not in things of the greatest
‘ importance.’ One of his superstitions was,
that he would never swear by a certain
cross of St. Leo, which, it was said, had
the faculty of striking those with death
within a year who perjured themselves on
it; but it was his constant practice to oblige
others to swear by this very cross. Super-
stition and credulity always go together.
He entertained astrologers at his court;
but irritated against one of these impostors
who had foretold the death of his mistress,
he sent for him, resolved without doubt not
to spare him: ‘ Thou who seeest into futu-
rity,’ says he, ‘ tell me when thou shalt die.’
The cunning astrologer saved himself by
this reply, ‘ I shall die three days before
‘ your Majesty.’ They from that time
took care of his person. Knowledge was
then so far from wise philosophy, that
the extravagant dispute between the rea-
lists and the nominals became at once a
religious and a state affair. He interested
himself in it, to know if things or words
were the objects of logic. This grand
question divided all the schools, and ex-
tended itself to the mystery of the faith.
The opponents on both sides mutually
treated

116. ELEMENTS OF THE

treated each other as heretics: they solicited government to interfere: the king declared for the realists, and called in all the books of the nominals. He at length restored these rhapsodies to their liberty, which no person has been able to read for a long time since, while the memoirs of Philip of Comines are in the hands of the whole world. This state historian would be still more estimable, if he had not abandoned the duke of Burgundy his master, to attach himself to Lewis XI. Several in giving his learning the deserved applause, reproach him with his false heart. Lewis XI. established the post-office; and, to give the finishing stroke to this useful institution, ordered that the places should not be vacated but by death, resignation, or forfeiture. Seeming to keep up to the strict rules of justice, he examined all the laws and customs. In fine, he made a fixed code, and abridged the tediousness of law-suits. He ordered that weights and measures should be uniform in his kingdom; a useful project, the execution of which would be always desirable. He instituted the order of knighthood of St. Michael, making it at once as brilliant as that of the golden fleece instituted by Philip the Good duke of Burgundy. These orders contributed very much to make the
ancient

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 117

ancient chivalry fall to the ground, already much decayed since the establishment of the company of ordnance. It was a wise policy to make those titles of honour valuable, which attached the subject to the sovereign. He had increased the tax to three millions, and raised, during twenty years, four millions and seven hundred thousand livres per annum, which would amount to twenty-three millions at this time. Charles VII. had never raised more than eighteen hundred thousand livres, though it may be said this prince did not draw money from his subjects to spare their blood. He exhorted his son to diminish these taxes; a counsel often given by dying monarchs, but rarely executed by their successors.

CHARLES VIII.

THE last king had restrained his nobles and his people by policy and rigour. This submission could scarcely be supported under a king of thirteen years old, weak of body, and of an understanding too badly cultivated to sustain the weight of
of

118 ELEMENTS OF THE

of business, The beginning of Charles VIII.'s reign was troubled by a civil war. Ann of France, his elder sister, wife of Peter of Bourbon, lord of Beaujeu, a princess of uncommon merit, governed the kingdom during the minority of her brother, according to the last will of Lewis XI.; she found a competition in the duke of Orleans, since Lewis XII. the presumptive heir to the crown, who, through his ambition, was the disturber of the kingdom, before he was the father of it through his goodness. His intrigues against Madam Beaujeu were unsuccessful. The states-general confirmed the orders of the late king: the parliament, to whom it was afterwards addressed, disapproved of his pretensions, and the first president, James of Vaugerie, told him, that the government, the war, and the finances, were not the business of that tribunal. The disinherited duke revolted with a considerable party, and retired into Brittany. The first year of this war turned to the advantage of the king; and at length the battle of St. Aubyn finished the conquest of the rebels. The duke of Orleans was made prisoner.

England then was the theatre of a new revolution, Henry VII. of the house
of

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 119

of Lancaster, by the mother's side, having gained the crown from that of York. Notwithstanding which, there were English engaged in the army of Brittany. These implacable enemies of France, ardently seized the occasion of tearing it to pieces. Mezerai remarks, that a combat of Jays and Pyes seems to have presaged the battle of St. Aubyn. How could an estimable historian, of a liberal mind, be so superstitious in these later ages, and so fond of the marvellous, contrary to true history? The duke of Brittany dying without male-heirs, the government immediately thought of the king's pretensions to this dutchy, which it was essential should be reunited to the crown. Maximilian of Austria flattered himself with the acquisition of it, by espousing Ann of Brittany. The marriage was already made by proxy. It was afterwards broken, and they resolved to marry this princess to Charles VIII. She had as much aversion for him as she had liking for Maximilian; her conscience likewise recoiled at the idea of an engagement incompatible with the first which she had made; but Brittany being exposed to French arms, the council of Ann entered into the views of the court. The advantages of peace, the superior reasons of state with regard to particular interests, the necessity

cessity of yielding to circumstances, were all so well represented, that she at length sacrificed her repugnance to them. By the treaty of peace and of marriage, Charles and Ann mutually yielded their rights over Brittany. The duke of Orleans, whom the king had generously released from prison, zealously served in this affair, though he was enamoured with the same princess. He became from that time as good a subject as he had been an ambitious head of party. Generous souls may sometimes be led into error, but they can never be ungrateful, and gratitude carries them very soon back to their duty. This marriage was a double affront to Maximilian. He saw himself deprived of his wife; and his daughter Margaret, who was contracted to the king by the treaty of Arras, had been sent back from France. He breathed out nothing but invectives: he had recourse to arms, to negotiations; and, while his ambassadors were employed in England and Spain, he rendered himself master of Arras. Charles having purchased peace with England, found it no difficult matter to crush a feeble enemy, to whom the emperor his father would give no assistance. Never was occasion more favourable to seize the spoils of the house of Burgundy. The rage for foreign conquests

quests blinded the eyes of the young king. Heir by right of the house of Anjou to the kingdom of Naples, which had been lost for a long time, he thought of nothing but regaining it. He sacrificed a certain advantage to a deceitful hope. On one side, he rendered to Ferdinand, the Catholic king of Spain, Roussillon and Cerdagne, which had been engaged to the Lewis XI. without exacting any other thing than neutrality in the war with Italy. It is pretended, that two cordeliers, bribed by the artful Ferdinand, contributed much to this treaty, and that they made it an obligation of conscience to the king and Madam de Beaujeu. On the other side, he restored the French county and Artois to Maximilian, sending him back his daughter. All his wishes bent towards Naples; young flatterers excited his impetuosity. That which he was willing to lose in France, he reckoned he should regain with an overplus in Italy. In spite of the representations of his sister, then dutchess of Bourbon, and the chief heads of his council, he set out with but few troops, and hardly any money, upon this dangerous expedition. Pope Alexander VI. who at first exhorted him to it, afterwards engaged in a league, as well as Peter of Medicis, with Alphonso of Arragon, king of

Vol. II. G Naples :

Naples : but intrigue was better understood in Italy than the art of war ; the French had only to shew themselves to spread terror. Florence opened its gates ; Rome could not defend itself ; the pope, inclosed within the castle of St. Angelo, hasted to capitulate, and put into the hands of the king, Zezim, son of the famous Mahomet II. who had conquered Constantinople in 1453. Zezim having disputed the empire with his brother Bajazet, was defeated, and sought an asylum at Rhodes ; the knights delivered him up to the king, and the king to the pope. Alexander VI. the most unworthy man in the world to wear the tiara, applied to Bajazet the sultan of the Turks, to assist him with succours against the French ; in return for which, he certainly intended to have put Zezim into his hands. But having insisted that the pope should put him again in possession of this young prince, flattering himself that he should, by this means, become formidable to Bajazet, whom he proposed to attack, the pope was obliged to comply. Zezim was sent to Charles ; but if some authors are to be credited, he was poisoned before his dismissal, and the poison was administered by the pope. When we see the king of France, the master of Rome, kissing the feet of Alexander VI. a monster stained

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 123

stained with all the crimes of a Tiberius, presenting him the water to wash after mass, and placing himself below the cardinals, we have, perhaps, the strongest instance that can be produced, of the force of custom, or the reverence with which religion inspires us for its ministers.

Meanwhile, the king of Naples saw the storm rise for his destruction; his cruelty had rendered him odious, and he feared his own subjects no less than his enemies. Tyrants are generally cowards; he gave up the kingdom to Ferdinand his son, and instantly disappeared. Charles advanced towards Naples as if he had been only a traveller; nothing stopped him. He entered into this capital five months after his departure from France. The rapidity of his progress only increased his imprudence; and while he was giving a loose to pleasures, and making feasts and tournaments, the pope, the emperor, the king of Spain, the Venetians, and the duke of Milan, entered into an alliance to wrest from him a conquest which he had taken no care to secure. Instead of taking measures against their designs, he suddenly quitted Naples, leaving only three or four thousand men under the command of the count de Montpensier, a courageous prince, but whose talents were not equal to the importance of his

commission. The return of the king was not easy : he was to cross the Apenine, and transport the artillery through places where no carriage had ever passed. The Swiss drew them themselves, endeavouring to repair by this means a fault which they had been guilty of, and which had irritated the king against them. The confederacy waited for him at Tornoue near Placentia, and his destruction seemed to be inevitable ; yet, with only seven or eight thousand men, he defeated the Italian army in less than an hour, which consisted of thirty thousand combatants. Commynes assures us, that this astonishing victory had been predicted by Jerome Savonarola, a Dominican enthusiast, who pretended to inspiration at Florence, declaimed against Alexander VI. and was condemned to the fire as a cheat and seducer. His predictions resembled many others hazarded with confidence by impostors or fanatics, and sometimes verified by the event ; because it is impossible but that sometimes they should be so.

Alexander VI. seeing the king distant from Rome, dared to send to him to Turin, an order to go directly from Italy, and withdraw his troops from the kingdom of Naples ; and in failure of obedience, to come in person and render an account of his
his

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 125

his conduct, under pain of excommunication. This bravado was received with contempt, Charles opposing only raillery to the insult: but raillery was not suitable to the state of his affairs; he lost his new kingdom in as short a time as he had gained it. The Neapolitans, whether from national antipathy or just subject of complaint, very soon discovered great enmity against the French, who, on their side, did nothing to merit their affection. The king of Spain, the famous Ferdinand the catholic, the most artful politician of his age, to whom they had given Roussillon and Cerdagne, on condition that he should not meddle in the war, had been busy in it from the beginning of the undertaking, less jealous of his word than of the interest of his house, established on the throne of Naples. Gonsalo of Cordoue, his general, very soon drove the French out, who carried with them no fruit of their conquests, but that shameful malady which is improperly called *morbus gallicus*, and which had been brought from America to Spain in the fleet of Christopher Columbus, and carried into Italy by the Spaniards.

The imprudence of Charles VIII. his inapplication, his amusements, and the lightness of his character, were the principal causes of so sad a reverse; but the

cardinal Briconet, his minister, is suspected of having betrayed him in favour of the pope. No person had been more ardent than he for the expedition to Italy, when Alexander desired it; when the pope changed his party, the cardinal, perhaps, changed his sentiments: be that as it will, misfortunes became a lesson for the king. He saw his faults, and endeavoured to repair them; but death did not allow him time: an accidental apoplexy carried him off in his twenty-eighth year. He had had four children by Ann of Brittany, who all died in their infancy. The duke of Orleans was his successor. Under this reign the discovery of a new world, which had been looked on as a chimera, confounded the presumptuous ignorance of those who denied the Antipodes. Christopher Columbus, a Genoese, with three little Spanish vessels, had the courage to seek and the glory to find America: he first discovered the islands in the year 1492. Americh Vesputse, a Florentine merchant, discovered the Continent some years afterwards, and gave it his name, less worthy of being celebrated than was that of the first navigator. On the other hand, the Portuguese opened a new way to the East Indies, by making the tour of Africa. These prodigies of navigation were owing to the compass,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 127

pass, which was discovered by a Neapolitan towards the end of the fourteenth century. Who would have believed, that a needle, touched with a loadstone, would be able to conduct fleets beyond what was supposed to be the limits of the world; and who will dare to say, that nature has not still some phænomenon in store capable of producing as great effects? The commerce of the Europeans immediately comprehended the whole circumference of the earth; but it is a matter of doubt whether they have gained or lost by it.

L E W I S X I I .

LEWIS XII. seemed born for the happiness of France; humane, generous, and equitable: he had all the experience which could be gained from years and misfortunes: his age was thirty-six: his long imprisonment after the battle of St. Aubin had much allayed the heat of his youth. If he was fond of war and of pleasure, he was still more so of his people. From the first year of his reign he diminished the taxes, and he sacrificed his resentments against the lords who had op-

posed him with the greatest obstinacy and vigour. 'The king of France,' said he, 'will never revenge the injuries done to the duke of Orleans.' All the world admired this maxim; the greatest part blushed whilst he pardoned them. He took particular care of administering justice with the utmost integrity, of abridging the pleadings of the courts, of establishing good order, and restraining the excess of the students of the university. This body, in spite of the reformation made by Charles VII. preserved the passion for its injurious privileges, opposed these sage rules, and silenced, according to ancient custom, professors and preachers, who, in taking leave of their audience, failed not to inveigh against the king. Such oppositions being already less dangerous than ridiculous, the university was very soon reduced humbly to sue for pardon.

Queen Ann, who, from the death of Charles VIII. had returned to the possession of Brittany, which province was of consequence to Lewis XII. not to lose, his former inclination for this princess was fortified by reasons of state, which gave him an inclination to marry her; but he had already been married a long time to Jane of France, daughter to Lewis XI. who was equally deformed and virtuous. Under pretence that
this

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 179

this marriage had been forced, that it had never been consummated, nor ever could, three commissaries of the pope, after a judicial examination, pronounced a sentence of divorce, and the king married Ann of Brittany. Alexander VI. by favouring him in an affair so delicate, consulted equity less than passion. He procured to Cæsar Borgia (his bastard) the dutchy of Valentinois, and an advantageous establishment. Every step of this pontiff had for its object his own interest, and the aggrandizing of his family. He betrayed the king when he thought he could gain by his treason.

If a taste for conquest had not seduced Lewis XII. the kingdom would have become more flourishing and more happy than ever. Unhappily he had claims upon Milan by Valentin Visconti, his grandfather, and he was not willing to renounce the crown of Naples. Chimerical hopes had engaged his predecessors in a fatal war, where the rapidity of his success was followed by quick disgrace. The king having joined the Venetians, to despoil Ludovick Sforza, who had seized on Milan, sent a little army to the other side of the Alps, and in twenty days the Milanese and the Genoese states were conquered. The king made his entry into

Milan; but after his departure, a faction arose among the French, and Ludovick drove him out in a little time. Lewis soon repaired this loss. He returned to Milan, took Ludovick, and carried him to France, where he died.

This first step was a prelude to the conquest of Naples: to assure himself of success in it, Lewis proposed to Ferdinand, the Catholic king, that he should share it with him, and they made a secret treaty in concert with the pope. Gonsalvo Cordoue, as artful as Ferdinand his master, arrived at Naples under pretext of opposing the French; all at once they published the treaty. The king of Spain, according to custom, coloured, with a motive of religion, the most manifest injustice. If he wanted to ruin his relation, it was that he might afterwards make war on the Turks. The unhappy Frederick, king of Naples, overpowered by the French and Spaniards, demanded an asylum in France, and retired thither; while the victors divided his dominions between them. This division was an occasion of dispute, which produced an open war. Gonsalvo, truly worthy (notwithstanding his breach of faith) of the surname of Great Captain, beat the French, and drove them from place to place, till he had at length taken from them all their conquests.

The

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 131

The king endeavoured to re-establish his affairs in Italy; a numerous army which he sent thither gave him the greatest hopes: they all vanished through the fault of the cardinal of Amboise, his minister. This man, hitherto respectable on account of his zeal for the king, a friend of the state, a minister (according to the remark of Mezerai) without pride and without avarice, a cardinal with only one benefice, could not resist the ambition of being pope. Alexander VI. happening to die, being poisoned at a feast, if we may believe common opinion, of the same poison which he had destined for several cardinals, the conclave assembled itself. The French army were at the gates of Rome: Amboise kept it there too long: the Italians persuaded him to draw off the troops, to render his election the more free. He believed them, terror was dissipated, and they elected an Italian pope. Thus the cardinal had the chagrin of being duped, by having neglected the interest of his master.

The rainy season put a stop to military expeditions. Gonsalvo still vanquished the French. It was there that the celebrated knight Bayard stopped himself alone two hundred Spaniards at the foot of a bridge; but the exploits of a particular person could not decide the success of the

war. There had been some fruitless negotiations between Lewis and Ferdinand. The king dismissed the Spanish ambassadors, after having made complaints of the perfidy of their master. One of them having told Ferdinand, that he was reproached by that prince with having betrayed him twice, he replied, 'By God the drunkard is a liar; I have betrayed him above ten times.' This anecdote, recorded by Daniel, agrees very well with the conduct of the king of Spain. Never were treaties trifled with in a manner more odious. He had aggrandized himself by violence on the ruins of the Mahometan Moors, from whom he had taken the kingdom of Grenada. He employed fraud against the Christian princes, always affecting that zeal for religion which renders villany so dangerous.

Lewis XII. more sincere, was much less prudent. We can neither conceive nor excuse the treaty of Blois, by which he promises his eldest daughter to Charles of Austria, afterwards Charles V. grandson of the emperor Maximilian. Brittany, Burgundy, Milan, and Genoa, were to be the dowry of this princess, on condition that the king died without male heirs. Such a dismembering would have been a mortal wound to France. The states-general, assembled at Tours, foresaw this

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 133

this misfortune: they represented to the king the inconveniency of the treaty, and the violence which the laws of the kingdom would suffer by the alienation of the dominion. Lewis already repented of the step he had taken. Several people believed that he had engaged his word with a resolution of not keeping it; for the falseness of princes at that time seemed to authorise such an artifice. He agreed to the representation of his state, and gave his daughter to the count of Angouleme, the presumptive heir to the crown.

Genoa, so many times rebellious, revolted anew. Pope Julian II. had blown up this fire. This pontiff, ambitious and a warrior, had thoughts of extending the dominions of the Holy See. After having despoiled Cæsar Borgia, the Machiavelian hero, of the lands which Alexander VI. his father had procured him by criminal contrivances, he endeavoured to drive from Italy all foreign princes; and the power of Lewis excited his hatred as much as his jealousy. The king marched in person to chastise these mutineers. Genoa yielded at discretion. He entered it sword in hand, with all the appearance of a victor who breathes vengeance; but his clemency disarmed him, and he made himself adored by pardoning.

This.

This rapid expedition was followed by the famous league of Cambray, which armed almost all Europe against one little republic of Italy. Venice, once a little fishing place, was become, by industry and commerce, a flourishing state. As ambition grows with strength, it had aggrandized itself at the expence of its neighbours. Pope Julian II. the emperor Maximilian, the king of France, and the king of Spain, in spite of their particular divisions, united to crush this commercial republic. Every one complained of some usurpations, and were desirous of retaking their own. The pope breathed out anathemas, with which the Venetians were not affrighted. Lewis appeared at the head of a formidable army; he was impatient of fighting. It was represented to him, that he had to do with a wise enemy, against whom he could not be too much furnished with precautions. ‘I will give,’ said he, ‘so many fools to govern them, that all their wisdom shall not be able to withstand.’ The French impetuosity effectually triumphed at the battle of Agnadel. The Venetians were there defeated; and the French immediately seized on the greatest part of their places. They seemed lost without resource; but the policy of the pope saved them. As soon as he saw himself master of Romania, having
that

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 135

that which he desired, his first resolution was, to deprive others of the fruits of their common league. He pardoned the Venetians to do hurt to his allies. The emperor, whose negligence had always lost favourable occasions, began to act when there was no more to vanquish. The king retook the road to France; Julian tried every method to raise up his enemies against him, and detached the Swiss from his alliance, with much less trouble; because this people, greedy of money, and becoming necessitous, could not obtain the increase of their pensions. Lewis, in a fit of choler, expressed himself with regard to them in terms too little guarded. 'It is astonishing,' said he, 'that these miserable mountaineers, to whom silver and gold were unknown before my predecessors gave it them, should dare to make laws for a king of France.' The Swiss did not forget these indiscreet words, and very well knew how to revenge themselves. Julian also gained Ferdinand the Catholic king, by investing him with the full and entire possession of the kingdom of Naples. It was of little consequence to this prince to violate his faith, provided he could find his profit in so doing. Maximilian alone remained faithful to the treaty, because his own interest exacted it

2

of

of him. Lewis, from this time, looked on the pope as a prince armed against him, and Julian was rather more jealous of this quality than the government of the church. He acted as an enemy, not only by negociations, but by all kinds of hostilities: nevertheless, full of respect for the Holy See, the king was not willing to take up arms, without consulting the clergy of his kingdom. Having assembled them at Tours, he proposed to them in form, a case of conscience, on different questions, relative to the conduct which he should hold towards the pope. The answers of the clergy were dictated by reason and the rights of the people; they determined that the war was lawful, that it was necessary to preserve the pragmatic sanction, and to send no more money to Rome: at the same time, they granted a subsidy on the ecclesiastical estates, to maintain the honour of the crown against the Roman pontiff. Julian was no less fierce and obstinate; he courageously waited for the French army, besieging Misandole in person, visiting the trenches, exposing himself to the fire of the cannon, and at last entered this place through a breach. While he thus maintained the reputation of a warrior, the king of France and the emperor cited him to appear at a general council convoked.

voked at Pisa. He on his side had convoked one at Rome. He treated with the emperor, with Ferdinand, with the Venetians, and with England: he animated the Swiss, persuading them to invade the Milanese. The old pope animated all Europe, and without being dismayed by any thing, pursued the war with a lively vigour. Gascon of Foix, duke of Namur, a young prince as wise as valiant, commanded the French army. He immortalized himself by exploits which produced no solid fruit. The battle of Revermo, which he gained, was at the same time a misfortune, since it cost him his life. Lewis XII. lamented this event as a prince filled with humanity. ‘I would be glad,’ said he, ‘not to have a grain of land in Italy, could I at that price recover to life my nephew Gascon of Foix, and all the brave men who have perished with him. God preserve us from ever more gaining such victories.’ Nevertheless, the Swiss, outrageous at the affront which they had received, penetrated into the very heart of the country of the Milanese, who were obliged to abandon places which they had till then kept, and very shortly the whole country was left vacant to the Swiss. It was in vain that the intrepid Bayard, surnamed the Fearless and Irreproachable Knight,

138 ELEMENTS OF THE

Knight, and several other French heroes, did prodigies of valour. The generals disagreed among themselves, the king was sparing of money, he was too far off to take good measures, and the confederates had superior forces. An ill-concerted enterprise is like to be ruined sooner or later, notwithstanding the first appearances of success.

Ferdinand, after many usurpations, was still desirous of taking the kingdom of Navarre from Jane of Albert, a relation and ally of the king of France. Either a real or imaginary bull from Julian, which excommunicated and deposed Jane as an adherent to the council of Pisa, served as a pretext to this new robbery. To obtain the assistance of the English, he fraudulently flattered them with an invasion of Guienne. The kingdom of Navarre, conquered by his arms and his intrigues, has ever since been an appendage to the crown of Spain. M. de Voltaire says, that he was called in Spain the wise, the prudent; in Italy the pious; in France and London the perfidious. His actions will decide to which of the titles he had most claim. The bull was not to be found by which he pretended a right of usurping the dominions of his neighbour; but Julian was of a character to renew the enterprises of

Gregory

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 139

Gregory VII. and Innocent III. He not only threw an interdiction on the kingdom, and anathematized the pragmatic sanction, but he solicited the king of England, Henry VIII. to turn all his forces against France, promising him the deposition of Lewis, and the crown.

Europe was delivered in 1513 from this audacious pope: 'A man,' says Daniel, 'who had greater talents for the government of any other state than that of the church.' The cardinal of Medicis succeeded him under the name of Leo X. The French, commanded by Lewis of Tremoille, returned to the Milanese, and made a new conquest as rapid and as fruitless as the preceding. The Swiss, without artillery, without cavalry, attacked Tremoille at Navarre, fighting with a prodigious valour, and gained the victory. Milan was retaken, and Genoa revolted, as it had always done in like circumstances. Machiavel, cited by M. Henault, observes, that Lewis XII. was guilty of five capital faults in Italy: he ruined the weak; he increased the power of the strong; he introduced a stranger who did not make it his residence; and he sent thither no colonies. The politic Machiavel supposes, perhaps too lightly, that colonies could be established in so few years, and in such turbulent times.

times. All these misfortunes, by weakening the kingdom, increased the audacity of their enemies. Henry VIII. king of England, who had formed a league with the pope, made an irruption in Picardy, having with him the emperor Maximilian, whose troops he paid, and to whom he gave a crown a day for his table. So much need or avarice degraded this emperor. The French were put to the rout at Guinegate, which is called the Day of Spurs, because that day they were more useful to our soldiers than their swords. Bayard being at length obliged to yield to numbers, briskly attacked a knight of the enemy's army, and having disarmed him, immediately surrendered himself to his party. In a few days he demanded his liberty; 'and your ransom,' said the knight; 'and yours,' replied Bayard; 'for I have made you my prisoner.' Henry VIII. and the emperor decided this dispute in favour of the French hero. This anecdote appears remarkable, as it shews the spirit of ancient chivalry.

The battle of Guinegate lost Terouane and Tournay; but the greatest danger was in Burgundy. Dijou was besieged by the Swiss, and terror spread itself even to Paris. Dijou was saved only by the address of Lewis of Tremoille, governor of Burgundy, who

at

at len
prom
and
The
affec
refus
being
they
anoth
tions
Thro
to h
king
pope
impo
in Ita
the n
leagu
marr
VIII
it co
king
nand
had
rever
leagu
the F
of re
great
disor
year

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 141

at length engaged the Swiss to raise the siege, promising them all that they could wish, and more than they had power to grant. The king, charmed with this event, affected to complain of the governor, and refused to ratify the treaty. The Swiss being departed, and winter approaching, they had time to take precautions against another invasion. During these transactions, queen Anne of Brittany died. Through a scruple as natural to her sex as to her piety, she had often teased the king on the subject of the war with the pope; and, according to some authors, her importunate representations hurt the affairs in Italy. The hope of having a son, and the necessity of weakening a too formidable league, determined Lewis upon a new marriage. He obtained the sister of Henry VIII.; but instead of receiving a dowry, it cost him a million of crowns. The king of England enraged against Ferdinand the Catholic, his father-in-law, who had often deceived him as well as others, revenged himself by this alliance. A league formed offensive and defensive with the English, put Lewis XII. in a situation of repairing his misfortunes. He made great preparations for war, when a violent disorder carried him off in the fifty-sixth year of his age. His passion for his
young

young queen had abridged his days. 'The good king,' says Bayard's historian, 'to please his wife, had changed entirely his manner of living; for when, according to his usual custom, he should have dined at eight o'clock, he deferred dining till twelve; and, instead of going to bed at six o'clock in the evening, he often staid up till midnight.' We may see how different the customs of these times were from ours.

Lewis XII. deserved and received from the nation the greatest title that a king could bear, the name of Father of his People. He lessened the taxes almost one half. Never had he exacted new subsidies but to defray the expences of a war. If he employed a resource dangerous, and till then unknown, the making merchandise of places, he did not extend it to the offices of judicature: they were not to be purchased. The dignities of the robe were given only to merit. It was a custom, that the parliament should present three persons for a vacant place, and that the king should name one: thus being chosen from among the most celebrated advocates, they had, in some degree, acquired a right of judging, by virtue of their distinguishing knowledge.

Lewis

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 143

Lewis is sometimes reproached with a false oeconomy. He had better, without doubt, have increased the pensions of the Swiss, and have sent more money into Italy ; but the fear of oppressing his subjects gloriously justifies him from such a reproach. With a revenue of thirteen millions of livres, equal to about fifty of the present time, he supported the majesty of the throne, and furnished every thing that was wanting. The state was not in debt, plenty reigned in the provinces, justice was done in a short time, and almost without expences ; for the fees were forty times less than they are now. By the edict of 1499, it is ordered, that the law should always be followed, in spite of orders contrary to the law which importunity might extort from the king : an admirable maxim, which, in securing the public tranquillity, could not but confirm the sovereign authority. The peasants were preserved from the violence of soldiers. An example was made of some of the gendarmes, and the rest returned to their duty. If Lewis was neither a great hero nor a great politician, (according to the remarks of M. de Voltaire) he had, however, the more desirable glory of being a good king, and his memory will be ever blessed by his posterity.

FRAN-

FRANCIS I.

FRANCIS count of Angouleme was great grandson of the duke of Orleans, who was assassinated by the duke of Burgundy. The crown belonged to him as first prince of the blood. His understanding, his talents, his courage, the greatness of his soul, all contributed to make him worthy of it. He had faults which drew on him great misfortunes. A fortunate and politic rival, whose success obscured his glory; but he shone even in misfortune, and the memorable events of his reign made an epocha as much more interesting, as they produced a revolution in the opinions of mankind. A king of twenty-one years old, full of fire and confidence, eager of reputation, born with the genius of war, having the appearance and the sentiments of an hero, would naturally deliver himself to the desire of conquest and victory.

Lewis had made preparations for a new expedition in Milan; Francis resolved to make use of them. The advice of the chancellor Prat furnished him with a resource for amassing money: a resource, which one would believe rather invented by

by an Italian negociator, than by a chief justice; it was that of selling the posts of judicature. They created several in the parliament of Paris, and those of other places; and the most important of the functions began, from this time, to become venal. This abuse, joined to an increase of taxes, prefigured a reign less equitable than the former.

After having signed treaties of peace with Henry VIII. the Venetians, and Charles of Austria, (whom we shall soon see menace France) the young king passed the Alps, and invaded the Milanese. The Swiss, who then took the title of the pope's protectors, excited by the cardinal of Siam, attacked him all at once, though he was then in treaty with them. They lost the famous battle of Marignan: victory was disputed two days. Francis made himself admired among a crowd of heroes: he passed the night upon a battery of cannon, not above fifty paces from a battalion of the enemy. The duke of Bourbon, the constable, acquired an immortal glory, which he afterwards sullied by his rebellion. Never had the Swiss shewed themselves so eager for combat; their long pikes formed a rampart almost inaccessible. In spite of this defeat, which had cost them more than ten thousand men, they offered to the duke of Milan, Maximilian

S'force, to defend him to the last extremity, if he would pay their soldiery. His inability of doing this furnished them with a pretext of drawing off, and the Milanese very soon submitted to the law of the victor.

The combat of the giants, which was the name given to the Day of Marignan by the old marshal of Trivulce, who had been in eighteen battles, gained to Francis I. the reputation of the most valiant prince in Europe. Leon X. as ambitious, but more supple and more the friend of peace than his fierce predecessor, desired an accommodation; for which purpose he failed not to flatter the king, and pretended to approve the design which he had of conquering Naples. One of the greatest objects of his policy was, that of annihilating the pragmatic sanction. They agreed to suppress it, and sought expedients to accomplish their purpose. The interests of the two courts were managed with much art in the agreement, by which the nomination of bishops and abbots was left to the king, who was to present to the pope the subjects which he had named. Reserves and expectatives were abolished on both sides. The superiority of the general council over the pope was passed over in silence. This treaty, the only means, perhaps, of re-establishing good intelligence with

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 147

with the court of Rome, met in France with the most lively opposition. The greatest part of the people were angry to see the decrees of the councils of Bale and of Constance brought to nothing, the canonical elections again suppressed, and annates restored to the court of Rome; for they agreed in this point without inserting it in the concordat, and it has always subsisted from that time. The clergy, the parliament, the university, all rose in concert against a law so opposite to the French maxims: the king spoke as an absolute master, and they obeyed. If policy could have disputed with the pope the money of the kingdom, it was, it seems, less able to dispute with the king the nomination of the great benefices; a custom which had been established under the first race, though contrary to ancient discipline. Ambition and intrigue rendered the elections subject to an infinite abuse; and bishops being considerable lords of fiefs, the public tranquillity, perhaps, demanded that they should be chosen by the sovereign. The Swiss also entered into a treaty with Francis: they sold him their alliance dear; but they had but too well proved how much their enmity was to be feared.

In the mean time, Charles V. began to excite the jealousy of a king twenty years older

than himself. He was heir to his two grandfathers, Ferdinand the catholic king, and the emperor Maximilian. In a tender age, with a solid understanding, cultivated by the best education, he had already given himself up to business, and was capable of the greatest things. Ferdinand died in 1516. We must observe here, that a Spanish historian praises him in spite of his perfidy and perjuries, saying, 'That he knew better than all other princes how to reconcile the law of God with the reasons of state.' It is thus that the prejudices of a nation will sometimes give the lie to true history. The young Charles, already possessor of the Low Countries, became by his death king of Spain, of Naples, and of Sicily. Maximilian, much less powerful, who had had the ambition of being pope, and who had never ceased to undertake without being able to execute, finished his laborious career, and left him Austria, with the hope of being elected emperor. Francis I. wished for this dignity; he employed intrigue and money to assure himself of the suffrage: the pope favoured him in appearance, and endeavoured underhand to exclude both the candidates, whose power in Italy he equally dreaded. The electors fearing to give a master to Germany, found it difficult

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 149

cult to decide either for one or the other ; but it was necessary to have an emperor who would restrain the power of the Turks. Charles V. was preferred, because the distance of his dominions, though large, gave the least umbrage to the Germanic liberty. They did not foresee that the empire would become hereditary in his house, and that it might aspire to universal monarchy. Before the election, the two rivals had affected to appear cordially united. Francis I. said, ‘ That Charles’s being a candidate did not at all offend him ; that they both made their court to the same mistress ; that the most fortunate would carry her ; and that the other must be content.’ This generous sentiment, however, gave way either to chagrin or policy. The first care of the monarch was, to attach the king of England to him, and to make him an ally against the emperor. He proposed an interview near Calais : they met each other with all the magnificence possible. This interview, called the Field of Cloth of Gold, because Francis was in a tent covered with gold cloth, produced nothing more than feasts and useless expences. Charles V. knew how to prevent its having any other effects. As soon as the two kings were separated, he went over into England

in order to gain cardinal Wolsey to his interest; a minister, whose soul was as base as his birth, and who always selling to the best bidder, forgot the liberality of the king as soon as he hoped to be better paid by the emperor. This cardinal governed Henry VIII. and very soon raised to France a necessary ally. On the other side, Leon X. less occupied by the duties of a common father than the pleasures and temporal interests of his see, far from inspiring these two princes with concord, sowed the seeds of division between them. Being willing that they should mutually weaken each other by war, he at first promised to Charles V. the possession of the kingdom of Naples, notwithstanding the ancient law of the popes, which says, 'That no king of Naples shall ever be emperor.' Afterwards, by a secret treaty, he promised Francis I. to refuse this investiture, and to leave him at liberty to attack Naples, under conditions that tended to aggrandize the ecclesiastical state. Some time after, less jealous of the character of a good man than that of a subtle politician, he declared himself for the emperor, whose offers were the most advantageous. The king began, without doubt, to repent of having made the agreement; for it is certain, that he had the strongest reason so to do. The
French

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 151

French took the advantage of the distance of Charles V. to retake Navarre, and lost it almost as soon as taken. War began to appear in all the extremities of the kingdom. The Milanese was again wrested from France; the pope and the emperor re-established there the house of S'forza. This revolution appeared inevitable. Lautrec, governor of the country, had drawn on himself the hatred of the people and the nobility, by the excess of his pride and severity. The king sent no more money, dissipating in vain expences the revenues of the state. As much as Lewis XII. had managed his subjects, and as much oeconomy as he had shewn in the administration of his finances, so much did Francis neglect this essential part of government. With such a conduct, could he support a conquest exposed to so many storms? It is said, that Leon X. died of joy when he learned our misfortunes. The faults of this voluptuous pontiff cannot tarnish the glory which he deserved in making science and the fine arts flourish, through his protection. His successor was Achien VI. preceptor to Charles V. who is eternally reproached with having disdained letters, after being by their means raised to the highest fortune. Lautrec, abandoned by the Swiss for want of

H 4

money,

money, and seeing his affairs desperate in Italy, returned to court. Francis reproached him on the loss of Milan: he replied with firmness, 'That the king was himself the cause; that the soldiers had served eighteen months without touching a penny from the treasury; that the Swiss had not been paid; that in fact the government ought to impute to itself their defection, and all the misfortunes of the war.' The king, who had given orders to Semblancai, superintendant of the finances, to send this general four hundred thousand crowns, ordered him soon after to be arrested. Semblancai in vain protested, that Madam de Angouleme, the monarch's mother, had seized on this money. They employed commissaries to judge him: the prosecution was long in coming to an issue; but at length the minister was condemned to be hanged, and the sentence executed at Montfaucon. He was not the first superintendant who had submitted to the same fate. He was a respectable old man; a victim, perhaps, to the avarice of Madam Angouleme, and to the jealousy of the chancellor du Prat, who mortally hated him. The innocent are always weak against such enemies.

The pope, the emperor, the king of England, Ferdinand archduke of Austria, the duke

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 153

duke of Milan, the Florentines, the Venetians, and the Genoese, all entered into a league against France. A confederacy so formidable was less fatal than the rebellion of the constable of Bourbon. This prince had acquired the chief glory of the battle of Marignan. The greatest services are sometimes returned by injury and hatred: far from being recompensed as he had deserved, all occasions had been taken of mortifying him. To fill up the measure of his misfortunes, the queen-mother became enamoured of him: she made him proposals of marriage, and resented a refusal. The passion of a vindictive woman, whose power was great at court, was not easily moderated: chancellor du Prat was the engine of her vengeance. They disputed with the constable the right he had to the house of Bourbon, under pretence that he was not descended from the elder branch in a direct line. This law-suit, founded on chicanery rather than justice, was given against him. The solicitation of Madam Angouleme gained an arrest of parliament to sequester the estate of the constable. This reduced to despair a man, whom it was of the greatest consequence to the nation to have kept in good-humour. He immediately treated with the emperor. The king being advised of it, might have se-

H 5

cured

cured his person; but through an affected candour, of which he was often the dupe, he continued to put confidence in the constable, who gave him the finest words, and seized the first occasion of flying. Gui Chardin recounts, that a Spanish lord refused to let this illustrious fugitive be lodged in his palace. ‘I can refuse nothing to your Majesty,’ said he, to Charles V. who asked it of him; ‘but I declare to you, that if the duke of Bourbon lodges in my house, I will burn it as soon as he comes out of it, as a place infected with perfidy, and consequently for ever unworthy of being inhabited by people of honour.’

So many enemies leagued against Francis I. did not deprive him of his courage. He had employed every means to procure resources, which the dissipation of the finances had rendered necessary, even so much as to seize upon a grating of massy silver, worth about seven thousand marks, with which the prodigal devotion of Lewis XI. had adorned the tomb of St. Martin. He was desirous of going into Italy; but fearing that the revolt of the constable would cause some insurrection in the kingdom, he satisfied himself with sending thither admiral de Bonivet, who overset every thing. Fortunately for him, his
enemies

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 155

enemies did not succeed better in Picardy, in Flanders, or in Spain. The French defended themselves at home, and were beaten beyond the Alps. Bonivet, too inferior to cope with a number of confederates, and with the genius of the marquis Pescaire, John of Medicis, and the constable, their three generals, being abandoned by the Swiss, attacked in his retreat from Bagrassat, and wounded in the first charge, lost all hope of conquest. The chevalier Bayard received also a mortal wound: they set him at the foot of a tree; he there made his confession to a gentleman who followed him. The duke of Bourbon arrived just at that time, testifying his esteem and compassion. 'I do not require your pity,' said Bayard to him, 'I die an honest man; but I pity you who fight against your king, your country, and your oaths.' Thus died this great man, an able and valiant commander, worthy of leading armies, who, notwithstanding, was never chief in command, because he was too little a courtier to unite glory and fortune.

Charles V. after the advantage which he had gained in Italy, was willing to make an irruption into France. The duke of Bourbon, who had inspired him with this design, was desirous of penetrating

H. 6.

into

into the heart of the kingdom; but they began with the siege of Marseilles. The efforts of the constable and of Pescaire, were not able to reduce this place. They decamped very much discontented with each other, the fierceness of the Italian having several times humbled the rebellious prince. The duke of Bourbon had assured him, that three strokes of cannon would so terrify the Marseillians, that they would come with a rope about their necks, and bring them the keys of the city. One day some people were killed in the same tent with Pescaire by a cannon ball. The constable running out at the noise of this accident, demanded what was the matter; 'Here are,' replied Pescaire, 'the consuls of Marseilles, who have brought us the keys of the city.' If Francis I. had heard the advice of the wisest of his council, he would have avoided the misfortunes which awaited him in Italy. His imprudence drew him over the mountains, and he there committed irreparable faults. Always directed by the admiral de Bonivet, whose advice was never otherwise than pernicious, he besieged Pavia, contrary to the opinions of the veteran officers, and he weakened his army by making a diversion on the side of Naples. While Pavia vigorously resisted him, the duke of Bourbon reassembled

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 157

bled his scattered troops in Germany, and brought them up. The enemy offered him battle; a false shame hindered the king from raising the siege, and Bonivet confirmed him in the resolution of fighting. This fatal battle resembled those of Poitiers and Agincourt. The king, after having killed with his own hands seven or eight men, surrendered himself a prisoner to Pomperan, the only French officer who had followed the constable. Pomperan had the glory of saving him from the fury of the soldiers, and of making him prisoner. The monarch received the duke of Bourbon his victor with kindness; but he ought to have reproached himself in a lively manner, for having ever made himself such an enemy. He wrote to the duchess of Angouleme, his mother, the regent of the kingdom, in these terms: 'Madam, every thing is lost except honour.' A letter worthy of a vanquished hero. Disgrace could not be supported with more dignity. The emperor learning this news, affected a moderation which was far from real. He would not permit any public rejoicings, saying, 'A victory gained over Christians ought to excite nothing but grief.' When any one makes a shew of these fine sentiments, it ought to be supported by a suitable conduct. This
veil

veil of modesty covered the pride and ambition of Charles V. The bishop of Osme, his confessor, had represented to him the glory which he would acquire in entering into a treaty with the king on reasonable terms: on the contrary, he proposed such very hard ones, as honour would not permit the other to accept. He insisted, that the French king should restore Burgundy to him, as a dominion which had been usurped from his house; that he should yield Provence and Dauphiny to the duke of Bourbon, for him to possess under the title of a kingdom; that he should renounce all his pretensions on Italy; and that he should satisfy the king of England by giving back the provinces of France, of which he had pretended to recover the possession. The reply of the king was conformable to the greatness of his soul; he protested, that he would rather finish his days in prison, than thus tear his kingdom to pieces; adding, that if he was cowardly enough to do it, his subjects would have more spirit than to submit.

Charles V. with his ambitious pretensions, one would have imagined, would have invaded France, and have engaged Henry VIII. to have carried fire and sword into it; but instead of profiting by this victory, he remained quiet at Madrid. He no longer

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 159

longer had the same intimacy with Henry and Wolsey which had formerly subsisted betwixt them; he blasted their vanity in its meridian, and detached himself entirely from their interests. Meanwhile, regret at imprisonment, and the danger of France, had made the mind of Francis I. more flexible: he was at length willing to come into some of the conditions which were offered him, in order to draw himself out of the hands of his enemy, persuaded that honour and conscience would allow him to break the promises which violence had forced from him. The emperor, who demanded to be put in possession of Burgundy before the release of the king, relaxed on this point, which they were not weak enough to agree to. By the treaty concluded at Madrid, Francis ceded Burgundy, and his rights of sovereignty over Artois, Flanders, &c. He engaged to return to prison, in case Burgundy was not restored in six weeks. His two sons were to remain as hostages, or else the dauphin, attended by a number of the chief people of the kingdom. In a word, the emperor secured to himself every advantage which he could reap from the situation of affairs. Marks of friendship were mutually lavished betwixt them, the falsity of which very soon appeared. At the same time that the illustrious

strious prisoner returned to France, his two sons were delivered to the Spaniards. The queen-regent, by her courage and extraordinary presence of mind, chose rather to expose them both, than to give as hostages with the dauphin, the great men who were the resource of the state. Before this treaty was signed, Francis had taken the useless precaution of making a secret protestation against it. He did not lose a moment in publicly displaying his intentions: summoned to execute his promise, he replied, 'That this affair interesting the whole kingdom, could not be finished but in concert with the States-general; and above all, with the States of Burgundy.' The Burgundians represented to him, that he had no right to alienate a domain of the crown, which the oath taken at his coronation bound him to keep; that in such circumstances, subjects were not obliged to keep to their obedience; and that they would rather perish than come under a foreign yoke. The ambassador of Charles V. seeing himself trifled with, insisted upon the parole that the king had given, of returning into Spain: but he eluded this demand, complaining of the violence and injustice of the emperor; offering, nevertheless, two millions of gold instead of the dutchy of Burgundy,

Burgundy, for the ransom of his children. He had already engaged by treaty with Clement VII. (the ancient Clement VII. not being reckoned amongst the legitimate popes) with the king of England, and the Venetians, to give liberty to Italy, and to re-establish Francis S'force in Milan. Thus every thing changes with the change of events. He who had ruined S'force became all on a sudden his defender. By a singular fatality, the pope was the victim of this league. The duke of Bourbon, to whom the emperor had promised the investiture of the dutchy of Milan, completed the conquest of it. Wanting money to pay his troops, he conducted them to Rome, that they might be satisfied by the pillage of it. In giving the assault to this city, he received a mortal stroke, and perished at thirty-eight years old, with all the glory of a hero, and all the ignominy of a rebel. Rome was inhumanly sacked, Clement VII. was made the prisoner of Charles V. who put on mourning at this victory; but, nevertheless, exacted four hundred thousand ducats of the pontiff for his ransom.

Meanwhile, the negociations concerning the treaty of Madrid being ineffectual, Francis I. and Henry VIII. solemnly declared war against the emperor, who accused

cused the king of France with having broken his word; and declared, that he would prove this charge against him hand to hand. His rival, in a writing signed with his own hand, gave him the lie in his throat, and summoned him to appoint a field for a single combat. They abided by these mutual defiances of each other, which were unworthy of the majesty of two great princes. But war was made in Italy with new fury. Lautrec besieged Naples, which defended itself more than three months; the plague was in the army, and destroyed the general; Andrew Doria, whose gallies had beaten those of the emperor, betrayed the French in Genoa; Naples was delivered; and Milan was not conquered. These miserable wars in Italy, undertaken through the ambition of kings, answered no other purpose than to depopulate the kingdom. At length peace was made at Cambray: the plenipotentiaries were two women, the dutchess of Angouleme for Francis I. and for Charles V. Margaret of Austria, governess of the Low Countries. This was the same Margaret whom Charles VIII. was to have married, and who was sent back into Flanders. The emperor desisted from his attempts upon Burgundy, referring his pretensions to a judicial determination.

The

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 163

The king renounced all sovereignty over Flanders and Artois, and promised two millions of gold crowns for the ransom of his children. The finances were exhausted as much by pleasure as war : Henry VIII. furnished money. The divorce which he was desirous of making with Catherine of Arragon, the emperor's aunt, that he might be at liberty to marry Anne Boleyn, the daughter of a private gentleman, was a motive for uniting himself more closely with Francis I. He had need of his succours against Charles V. and he gave himself hopes, that the suffrages of the university would be in favour of this divorce. The Sorbonne in effect decided, that his marriage was null, though it had been allowed for many years by the dispensation of Julian II. because it was not lawful that a woman should successively marry two brothers. Catherine of Arragon having been married first to the brother of Henry VIII. who died almost as soon as the ceremony was over, and the marriage having never (according to general opinion at least) been consummated, the pope had permitted Henry to marry the widow. It would have been reasonable to suppose, that the children, who were the consequence of their union, would have secured
the.

164 ELEMENTS OF THE

the mother from an attempt to dissolve her marriage as illegal: but nothing could moderate the passions of the king of England; resolved on this divorce, he used every means of making Clement VII. consent to it. Already the bull which he solicited had arrived in London; but Charles V. broke all his measures: the legate had orders to burn this bull, and the affair was to be tried at Rome. These delays and difficulties contrived by the pope, irritated the desires of the amorous prince: he married Anne Boleyn. Clement, ready to launch his thunders against him, fixed him a term for answering and declaring his last resolution. Henry VIII. who had written against Luther, by which he had gained the glorious title of defender of the church, was not willing to break with Rome: unfortunately his courier did not arrive till the day that had been fixed was past, and they made haste to fulminate the excommunication. Two days after, however, the answer arrived, which might have calmed the pontiff; but the blow was already struck, and the evil without remedy. Henry separated for ever from the church of Rome, and established himself chief of religion in England. This precipitation of Clement VII. was the more imprudent,

as

as th
great
It
revol
restin
whic
L
whet
ring
const
St. F
whic
cause
Dom
missi
Aug
cient
distr
semb
genc
rice
leisur
himf
of th
alon
if th
not l
a bo
pride
order
Dom

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 165

as the heresy of Luther had already raised a great part of Europe against the Holy See.

It is necessary here to give a sketch of a revolution which embraced so many interesting objects, and the circumstances of which are so essential to our history.

Leo X. in 1517, being in want of money, whether for the war which he was preparing against the Turks, or whether for the construction of the magnificent church of St. Peter, had recourse to an expedient which was then too often abused. He caused indulgences to be preached. The Dominicans were charged with this commission in Germany, to the prejudice of the Augustines, to whom it belonged by ancient custom. The manner in which they distributed these spiritual graces much resembled a public sale: they had indulgence-offices even in their inns. The avarice of the collectors did not leave them leisure to save appearances; and the pope himself was suspected of converting part of the alms to his own profit. This abuse alone would have excited some murmurs, if the resentment of the Augustines had not been of itself sufficient. One of them, a bold, zealous, eloquent man, full of pride and hatred, undertook to revenge his order: he breathed invectives against the Dominicans, spared not the disorders of the court

court of Rome or the clergy; and above all, he attacked the scandalous traffic of indulgences. A theological war, from however small a beginning, always becomes important, when an enthusiast finds zealous sectaries and puissant adversaries. Luther began by abuse: he very soon advanced to tenets. Free-will, justification, indulgences, purgatory, the sacraments, and authority of the pope and the church, &c. exercised his temerity. He made bold discussions, which conduced to heretical assertions. His party increased daily, as superstition, joined to irregularity of manners, had introduced into the church a number of palpable disorders, which had, for a long time, demanded reformation. It was easy to confound the Catholic religion with these abuses, which still found superstitious apologists: and moreover, the seducing charms of liberty captivated the people, and flattered their self-love, by subjecting received doctrines to a new examination. The art of printing had multiplied copies of the Holy Scriptures; and they fortified themselves in error by many difficult texts, of which the church only could fix the sense. Though Luther rejected confession and abstinence, he laid down ideas of perfection and rigour, which are always capable of making novelties respectable.

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 167

respectable. In fine, the princes found great advantage in seizing upon the property of the church, and in no more enriching Rome at the expence of their estates. Leo X. ought to have stifled these seeds of schism by gaining over Luther; but he despised him, and excommunicated him in 1520. But this proud theologian, supported by the duke of Saxony, was now become an irreconcilable enemy to popery. Saxony, Hesse, Brunswick, Denmark, and Sweden, all threw off the yoke. Zuinglius added to the errors of Luther, and drew after him the greatest part of Switzerland. A short time after, Genoa embraced these new opinions. One single monk was the author of this prodigious change. When we reflect on the greatness of his abuse against Leo X. whom he called little popeling little pope; when we reflect on the absurd manner in which he abolished private masses, assuring the world, that the devil had appeared to him, and had proved that these masses were idolatry, it is not possible to attribute the birth of protestantism to the progress of literature; it seems rather to be the fruit of barbarity and fanaticism. Unfortunately they had furnished too much matter to the false declamations of Luther, and his success made them sufficiently

ciently feel the wrong which superstition and ignorance had done to truth. Charles V. was desirous at once to restrain the Lutherans, and take advantage of these troubles, to subdue the princes of Germany. But the diet of Spier, in 1529, rendered a decree in favour of ancient religion useless: the reformed church protested against this decree, and from thence took the name of Protestants. They formed a league against the emperor, who was desirous of ruining them, fearing now that they would join the Turks, whose arms threatened the empire. He granted them liberty of conscience, and with their succours set Soliman at defiance.

These troubles were favourable to the policy of Francis I. By a whimsical contrast, he burnt the heretics of his own kingdom, at the same time that he entered into a league with the heretics of Germany. The schism of Henry VIII. gave him occasion to complain of Clement VII. and he hinted one day to the nuncio, that they should shortly follow in France the example of England. 'Freely, Sire,' replied the nuncio; 'you will be the first hurt by it. A new religion among a people demands afterwards a change of the prince.' If this maxim was not always verified, at least it was very soon proved, that

that a change of religion could produce cabals and fury. Though, by the treaty of Madrid and Cambray, the king had renounced the dutchy of Milan, he always attempted to renew his claims when he could find any means of doing it. Francis S'force furnished him with a subject of war, by cutting off the head of the French ambaffador, because his people had killed an Italian gentleman.

S'force died; the king, not having yielded Milan in his favour, hesitated not loudly to declare his designs; he demanded possession of it for the duke of Orleans, his second son. The emperor at first promised it; but afterwards evaded that promise, lengthening out the affair from time to time, and at length offering to agree, that they should demand it for the duke of Angoulême, the youngest son of France. He pretended that Italy would be endangered if Milan belonged to the duke of Orleans, who, from Catherine of Medicis, his wife, had pretensions on the dukedoms of Urban and Florence. Proud of his expedition in Africa, from whence he had come a conqueror of the celebrated Barbarossa, Soliman's general, he affected an imperious haughtiness with regard to Francis I. He declaimed against him in the hall of the consistory, and carried his insult so far as

to say, ' That if his captains and soldiers
 ' resembled those of his enemy, he would
 ' tie a cord round his own neck, and de-
 ' mand mercy from his enemy's hand.' He
 employed artifice to render the same prince
 odious, whom he had once loaded with flat-
 tery. All Germany was filled with mani-
 festos, where the king was accused of having
 treated with Barbarossa against the emperor.
 Italy retained the predictions which promif-
 ed the kingdom of France to the emperor.
 He promised it to himself; and before he
 set out for this conquest, he told his histo-
 rian, Paul Jove, to prepare plenty of paper
 and ink, that he might sufficiently tax the
 manufacture of their hands. It would
 have been wiser done, according to the re-
 mark of Mr. Henault, to have waited
 the event. Ready to enter into Provence,
 which, through the perfidy of the marquis
 of Saluces, had opened its gates to him,
 he asked a French gentleman, How many
 days there were before he should get to
 Paris? ' Of days!' replied the Frenchman;
 ' If you mean by this word Battles, I
 ' assure you that you have not less than
 ' a dozen at least; and that the aggres-
 ' sors will be the first beaten.' The
 marshal of Montmorency, directed by
 the king's orders, saved Provence. He
 had ravaged the whole country, leaving
 nothing

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 171

nothing but vines and trees, the fruits of which would be the cause of sickness to the imperialists. Intrenched in a camp near Avignon, he would not hazard a doubtful battle. Nothing could be more wise than these measures. The great army of Charles V. was soon destroyed by famine and sickness; he presented himself before Marseilles and before Arles, without being able to besiege them. In fine, he repassed the Alps, harassed in a lively manner by the country peasants. The Flemings succeeded no better in Picardy; the siege of Peronne was raised, after several assaults, supported with an admirable valour.

During the course of these fortunate events, the dauphin died of the effects of poison. They arrested his cupbearer, who was an Italian; he confessed himself guilty of this crime, and suspicions at the same time fell on the emperor. A hateful violence rendered him liable to such accusations. It is scarcely credible, that the most powerful sovereign in Europe should be cited to Paris as a vassal guilty of felony. It however happened; under pretence that the emperor had violated the treaty of Cambray, and that consequently the cession of the rights of sovereignty over Artois and Flanders became null. The parliament,

who looked on themselves as princes and their peers, declared Charles of Austria notoriously attainted of felony, and his counties of Flanders and Artois confiscated and reunited to the crown. This act of authority too much resembled the last bravadoes of Charles V. which they had turned into ridicule, from the time of his expedition to Provence. What power in the world could produce an arrest against the emperor? They were willing, without doubt, to teach him, that he had done wrong, by insulting his enemy.

The king took a much more useful step in making so powerful an alliance as that of Soliman. These sort of alliances had, till now, been looked on as unworthy of the Christian profession, in spite of the example which had been given by Alexander VI. Francis was complained of bitterly at the same time, for the turbulent scenes in Germany, in order to render him odious as a friend of the Turks; but policy sets aside that imputation. Christians, Mahometans, Catholics and Heretics, ought certainly to be united by the close bonds of nature. The greatest crime is, the uniting a part together, in order to ruin others. If religion could not disarm the Christian princes, is it astonishing that interest should have an effect on the infidels?

In

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 173

In consequence of this treaty, Barbarossa was to attack Naples, while the French army invaded Milan. The Turk kept his word; but the king arrived too late to second him. Italy would now have drawn near a fatal revolution, if the two princes had acted in concert. The emperor, meanwhile, seemed to shew no aversion for peace, and concluded with the king a truce of ten years. They met at Aigues Mortes, and there shewed all the marks of a perfect reconciliation; whether it was really so or not, actions alone could prove: an occasion for doing which presented itself very shortly. The Gantois having revolted against the emperor, on account of a tax which he insisted on contrary to their privileges, offered to be subjects to the king, and to render him master of the Low Countries. Francis generously refused it: he did more, he granted Charles V. a passage through France, on the promise of the investiture of Milan, and received him with all the magnificence possible, without demanding this promise in writing. A misplaced frankness multiplied his faults: he had the imprudence to act as a friend with a cunning enemy, whose character was very well known. He confided his secrets to the king of England, and furnished him with the means of perplexing

him, not only with the English, but with the Turks.

As soon as the emperor was arrived in Flanders, he was called upon to perform his promise with regard to Milan. He confidently replied, 'That he had promised nothing.' The anger of the king discharged itself on the constable of Montmorency, who lost his favour for having advised him to trust to the word of the emperor. A promise in writing would most likely have been as little binding; but it would have served as a proof of the perfidy. The bon-mot of the fool of the court, named Tribolet, deserves to be recorded. He had written on his tablets, that Charles V. was more a fool than he, in exposing himself to pass through the kingdom; '-but,' said the king to him, 'if I give him leave to pass through the kingdom without doing him any hurt, what wilt thou say then?' 'That is easily answered,' replied Tribolet; 'I would efface his name, and put in yours.' Several people had the same secret thoughts as this buffoon, though he alone had the privilege of speaking them.

This new broil of the two princes seemed to denounce a new war. The king, already furious in seeing himself unworthily trifled with, received still another affront.

Two

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 175

Two French ambassadors were assassinated on the road, by the order of the marquis of Guast, an officer belonging to the emperor. This was a reason more than sufficient for breaking the truce. Every thing was very soon in an uproar. The duke of Orleans made conquests in Flanders, and abandoned them to fly to the other extremity of the kingdom, where he hoped to partake of the glory of the battle in concert with the dauphin Henry. He was cruelly deceived in this hope. The dauphin miscarried at the siege of Perpignan; the count Enguien succeeded no better at that of Nice; the gallies of the king, joined to those of Barbarossa, (for the intrigues of Charles V. had not been able to detach the Turks from the French party) returned to Toulon after a useless siege.

It was a strange spectacle for Europe, to see Christians and Mussulmen united in one common army. It was for the emperor a fine occasion of invective. The king justified himself by a manifesto, and alleged the example of Abraham, David, and the Maccabees. All his reasons were less strong than the authority of Charles V. who at length went so far as to declare him an enemy of the empire, and of the Christian name in general.

The battle of Carizoles, which the count Enguien had gained in Italy, produced no

176 ELEMENTS OF THE

advantage; because a part of the army was recalled, which was necessary for the defence of the kingdom. Henry VIII. irritated against the king more than any thing on account of the confidence which he had indiscreetly put in the emperor, made a league with the last, notwithstanding their mutual resentments. Policy made him forget Charles V. his divorced aunt, and the persecuted church of England. Henry besieged and took Boulogne: the emperor invaded Soissons. They negotiated with him afresh. He fearing that this enterprize would be as fruitless as that of Florence, consented to the peace, and promised to the duke of Orleans, the king's second son, his daughter in marriage, with either Milan or the Low Countries. The death of this young prince discharged him from an obligation which he would perhaps have violated without scruple.

Henry VIII. made peace in 1546, by which Boulogne was to be rendered back to France in eight years, for eight hundred thousand golden crowns. Religious disputes already excited in France a dangerous ferment; the love of novelty, so strong among the French; a taste for letters, which excited a confidence of mind; the specious reasons with which some learned Protestants covered their false systems; the protection which had been
given

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 177

given them by Margaret queen of Navarre, and sister to the king, a princess of distinguished genius; and the very fires into which they threw the heretics, contributed to the rapid progress of heresy. The horrid executions of Mirandol and Cabrieres served only to strengthen the spirit of the sect, which was fond of hardening itself against rigour. Cabrieres, a little village of Comtat, and Mirandol, a great borough of a province, preserved the errors of the ancient Vaudois; but little different from those of the protestants. Luther had sent thither his ministers, and these Vaudois did not dissemble their opinions. The parliaments of Provence made too severe a decree against them, the execution of which was suspended for some years; but the first president of Oppede having represented them to the court in the light of rebels, the cardinal of Tournon engaged Francis to order that the decree should be executed. They foresaw not the atrocious excess to which Oppede and advocate-general Guerin would carry it. They fell upon these unhappy people: a score of heretics only were condemned to death; but three thousand people, without distinction either of sex or age, were inhumanly massacred. Mirandol, Cabrieres, and twenty-five bo-

roughs or villages, were reduced to ashes. What a means of honouring religion! The king heard it with horror; but this barbarity was not punished till the following reign, by the death of Guerin: Oppede having more credit at court, did not appear criminal.

It was now that Calvinism began to tear religion to pieces, and introduced the first seeds of a civil war. Calvin, a native of Noyon, had already made many proselytes. When he left his native country in 1538, he became the chief of the religion of Geneva: he regulated the tenets and the learning of this religion. His doctrine differing in some points from that of Luther, was still more incompatible with the rights of the church than his; especially with regard to the real presence, and the forms of exterior worship. The reformists of France, of Switzerland, of Holland, and England, chose it preferable to Lutheranism. The frequent variation of the Protestants is a proof how little solidity there is in their principles.

Henry VIII. did not long enjoy the peace which he had concluded with Francis; he died tranquilly after having reigned tyrannically: of six wives whom he had married, two were divorced; two others (of whom Anne Bolleyn was one) were beheaded.

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 179

headed. The zeal which he had at first shewn against Luther, became furious against the Heretics, and against the Catholics : he equally employed tortures to support his own schism and to stifle new opinions : a prince who piqued himself so much on being a Catholic, that he would never have separated from Rome, if the pope had had the prudence to consult the interest of the church rather than the resentment of Charles V. The king of France survived him only a few months. His libertinism had procured him that shameful disease which was brought from America by the Spaniards : he died at the age of fifty-two. According to Henault, he would have been the first prince of his time, if he had been happy enough to have added wisdom to his courage. His temerity, his negligence, his taste for expences and pleasures, contributed not a little to the misfortunes which the cunning and finessè of his rival had brought upon him. In the last years of his life, taught by experience, no longer a slave to love, he seriously applied himself to business. His great qualities, whether of heart or mind, appeared truly solid when his passions were dissipated ; but they had led him into faults which could never be repaired.

The art of war was no longer the same as under the feudal government. They were convinced of the necessity of infantry. From the time of Lewis XI. the army had been almost entirely composed of Swiss and Germans; the last, known under the name of Lanfquenets or Black Bands. Francis I. established a new infantry, divided into seven legions, of six thousand men each, according to the model of the ancient Roman legions. This militia did not subsist; they returned to the system of the bands, which consisted only of five or six hundred men.

The union of Brittany with the crown in 1532, was a great political work; the Britons themselves demanded this union as necessary to the tranquillity of the kingdom. It was with great difficulty they were brought to renounce the desire they had of having a prince among themselves; but in rendering their oaths to the court, they guarded themselves against those wars which would have followed, had they insisted on a subject of that province. Nothing could do more honour to Francis I. than the title of Restorer of Letters. If they flourished with more eclat in Italy through the care of Leo X. and the Medicis, they were, however, sufficiently cultivated

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 181

tivated in France to foretel the prodigies which they would one day bring to light. Among the men of quality, the cardinal of Bellai, William and Martin of Langei, his brothers, became as respectable for their science as for their places. Bude of Chastel, Lascaris, who was one of the scholars, escaped from the ruins of Constantinople, opened the sources of true literature; but Erasmus in Holland, through the brightness of his genius, and the prodigious extent of his knowledge, gave, in some degree, laws to the men of letters. It is very well known how wittily he ridiculed doctors who were still attached to their old pedantry. Francis enriched the royal library with the most valuable books; founded the royal college and printing-house; he suppressed the custom of writing the public acts in Latin; the Romans were warned not to write their acts in Greek.

The fine arts generally follow letters; architecture displayed its magnificence: Fountainbleau, and several other edifices, are monuments of this prince. He began the palace of the Louvre. Women appearing at court insensibly softened the natural rudeness of manners, which belongs to a warlike nation. Meanwhile, luxury had still its boundaries, the greatest lords carrying their wives behind them into the country;

182 ELEMENTS OF THE

country; all which they stiled most magnificent. The ceremonies which shone with the greatest eclat, were little in comparison of the objects which every day strike our eyes.

H E N R Y II.

HENRY II. son of Francis I. mounted the throne at twenty-nine years old: he had all the qualities of a warrior rather than those of a king; much courage and address, too much desire of leaving government to itself, and a blind passion for Diana of Poitiers, his mistress, whom he made duchess of Valentinois; an intriguing spirited woman, artful enough to subdue to her dominion (notwithstanding her age being forty-seven) a young king, under whose name she reigned as sovereign. The constable of Montmorency was recalled to court, and several of the principal officers belonging to the late king were disgraced. They endeavoured in England, to marry Edward VI. with Mary Stuart queen of Scots. The union of these two kingdoms would have been fatal to the French, which had always profited by their divisions.

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 183

divisions. Henry II. foresaw the danger, and married this princess to the dauphin. The English had been forced to yield up Boulogne. A violent sedition in Guienne, on account of the rigours of the excise on salt, was easily calmed. A war in Italy, on account of the dukedoms of Parma and Placentia, given by Paul III. to Lewis Farnese, his bastard, produced nothing considerable.

All the efforts of France were turned against Charles V. His despotism made Germany revolt. He kept the duke of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse prisoners. The famous regulation during the interim of 1548, by which he pretended to refer religious disputes to the general council, being in some points favourable to the Lutherans, permitting communion of two kinds, and allowing the marriage of priests, excited the indignation of the Catholics. In these circumstances, Henry II. leagued himself with some principal Germans to defend the Germanic liberty. He went into Lorraine, rapidly overrunning Metz, Toule, and Verdun; but his allies made peace with the emperor, who granted them liberty of conscience. This contrary stroke stopt the progress of his arms. He, notwithstanding, entered the kingdom with a full resolution of preserving

serving his conquests. The people having in some kind bought it, by a tax of twenty-five livres upon every belfrey, and by another raised on the income of church taxes, the greatest part of which, it is said, the dutchess of Valentinois had applied to her own use.

Charles V. being quite easy on the part of Germany, besieged Metz with the most formidable army that he had ever yet made a campaign with. This great city was but badly fortified. Francis of Lorraine, duke of Guise, took on himself the care of defending it. A noble emulation drew together to that place, almost all the first nobility of the kingdom. The prudence, activity, and courage of the duke triumphed over the forces of the emperor, who abandoned his enterprise, after sixty-five days siege. He revenged himself on Terouane, a strong city of the Low countries. One of his generals took it and razed it to the ground; so that its name does not now remain. Hesdin submitted to the same fate. It was on such ruins, and by shedding streams of blood, that these ambitious princes established their grandeur; their history furnishes subjects of tears for every eye. The following year they ravaged Brabant, Hainault, and Cambreses, gaining a victory over the emperor, and yet

yet drawing but little advantage from it. They fought in Italy with the same success as in Flanders. The French lost the battle of Marcian; but they made themselves admired at Sienne, where the brave Monthie, whose memoirs is still retained among us, supported a siege for six months. In short, the system of Europe changed all at once, by means of one of those events which are beyond human foresight. Charles V. after having put the nations of Europe in such commotion, resolved to live a life of solitude; whether it was through disgust, chagrin, or a sense of piety, he abandoned the government to Philip II. his son, who had espoused Mary queen of England. The empire would have given the finishing stroke to the grandeur of Philip; but Ferdinand, brother of the emperor, already chosen king of the Romans, would not be persuaded, whatever instances were made to him on that head, to renounce that title in favour of his nephew; so that the house of Austria was divided into two branches. There is no doubt, if we may believe report, but Charles V. when he came to himself in the monastery, where he past two years, finding himself without authority, or having any thing to do with worldly matters, repented him that he had so readily

dily reduced himself to that condition. The pleasures of solitude are by no means formed for ambitious minds. We may judge of the activity of this prince by the continual journies that he made; nine into Germany, six into Spain, seven to Italy, four to France, ten to the Low Countries, two to England, and two to Africa. Philip, from the depth of his closet, shook Europe with commotions. The immense treasures which he had drawn from Mexico and Peru, discovered in the reign of his father, put him in a condition of attempting any enterprize he pleased. America swimming in the blood of its own natives, was now, if I may so say, upon the eve of revenging itself on the cruel avarice of the Europeans, in furnishing them with the means of destroying one another. Without making any reflections upon the conquest of the new world, I would observe only, that the Spaniards, under pretext of planting there the faith, caused the very name of Christian to be abhorred, by the barbarities they committed. We may easily conceive every excess their passions could occasion; but that the gospel should serve as a cloke for inhumanity, is a thing that can be scarcely credited.

After

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 187

After the example of the popes of the house of Medicis, who had established their relations, the dukes of Tuscany and of Paul III. who had given Parma and Placentia to his son Farnase, Paul IV. Caraffee, being willing to put a principal in his house, proposed to the king the conquest of Naples, and to share it with him. In vain the constable of Montmorency represented the danger of the enterprize. The cardinal of Lorraine and the duke of Guise, his brother, each of them for their own ambitious views, inspired the monarch with false hopes, with which they dazzled his eyes. In conquering another kingdom, he was like to have lost his own. The duke of Guise, who had the command of the army, did not find those assistances in Italy which the pope had promised him, and but poorly supported his brilliant reputation, while he made this country wretched in a war, which was the rock that the French nation split upon. Emanuel Philabert, duke of Savoy, one of the first generals of his time, besieged St. Quintin for the king of Spain. The old constable commanded an army in Picardy. He was willing to assist the place, which was courageously defended by admiral Coligny his nephew. Great men are sometimes guilty of most egregious faults,
when

188 ELEMENTS OF THE

when too much presumption renders them deaf against prudent counsel. He was obstinately bent against the advice of the marshal of St. Andrew, to make all his troops march at the risk of being attacked with much disadvantage. The duke of Savoy found his account in it, and put the French to rout. This battle of St. Quintin may be compared to those which had formerly given the English half of the kingdom. The duke of Enguien and a number of lords were killed on the spot; a much greater number, among whom was the constable, were taken prisoners. Some days after, Philip II. shewed himself at the camp: the duke of Savoy would have kissed his hand; but he drew it away: 'It is I,' said he, 'that should kiss yours, who have procured me so glorious a victory.' This monarch, not being a warrior, could not do better than place his confidence in great commanders.

Terror now spread itself throughout France. If the king of Spain had marched straight to Paris, he might undoubtedly have taken it; but, whether such bold undertakings did not suit with his character, or whether prudence made him fear the resources of a warlike and powerful nation, whichever it was, he contented himself with taking St. Quintin, Catelet, Ham,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 189

Ham, and Noyon. The canons of St. Quentin retired from the place, though they left their benefices behind them: 'We will not,' said they, 'remain in a city where it is not permitted us to pray publicly to God for the prosperity of France.' Meanwhile, the nobility gathered together on all sides for the defence of the kingdom: the principal cities were eager in furnishing money. The king was then convinced, according to the remark of Mezerai, of the truth of his father's dying words; That the French were the best people in the world, and that it was the worst policy to torment them with extraordinary taxes and severity, since they so liberally contributed where the necessity of the state required it.

It was truly politic, as Francis I. had recommended, not too much to lift up the princes of the house of Lorraine, so considerable through their birth and their merit; but they thought only on the present moment, without preparing for futurity. The duke of Guise was immediately recalled from Italy, and Henry confided to him all his authority, under the title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. He could not place it in better hands. The duke had no sooner got his troops together than he formed a decisive enterprise,
the

the apparent impossibility of which facilitated the success. Mary queen of England, wife of the king of Spain, having declared war against France, he resolved to besiege Calais, and to render back to the crown a place which they had regretted for more than two hundred years. The garrison were but few in number during winter. This was the time which they took to attack it. After having deceived the enemy by feigned marches, all on a sudden he appeared before this city, which was looked on as impregnable. In eight days, in the month of January, he took Calais, which had cost eleven months siege to Edward III. Guines was also carried by assault. The taking of Thionville put the finishing stroke to the glory of the general. He was celebrated by every one as the saviour of his country. His amiable virtues gained him all hearts, while his arms made his enemies tremble.

The defeat of the marshal of Termes, beaten by the count of Egmont, gave a new relief to the prince of Lorraine. The more reputation and credit he acquired, the more the envious laboured to ruin him at court. The dutchess of Valentinois, constant mistress of the heart and soul of Henry, dissatisfied with the cardinal of Lorraine, took the part of Montmorency,
the

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 191

the rival of Guise. The constable was employed to negotiate peace with the king of Spain, even while he was yet a prisoner. This monarch, having lost his wife, and Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII. and Anne Bolleyn now beginning to reign in England, and refusing to marry him, they each of them separately treated with France at Catau Cambresis. Elizabeth could not yield Calais without offending the whole nation; but consented that the king should keep it eight years, at the end of which time he should engage to give it back again, or pay five hundred thousand crowns, if the restitution was not made at the fixed time. They foresaw, without doubt, that Calais would remain with France; at least that they would never be able to regain it but by force. But this wise princess found peace necessary, in order to seat herself firmly on the throne. Philip II. made a treaty infinitely more glorious; the duke of Savoy was re-established in his state; France rendered back a great number of places; Metz, Toule, and Verdun remained, in spite of the emperor Ferdinand, whose interest the king of Spain seemed to be little concerned about. This last prince, by the treaty of Catau Cambresis, was to marry a daughter of Henry II.;
but

but the marriage feasts were very soon changed into mourning.

The custom of tournaments, so common in the times of chivalry, still subsisted, though forbidden by different popes. The king excelled in these dangerous exercises: after having broken several lances with success, he insisted upon justing afresh with the earl of Montgomery, and was wounded in the eye by a stroke of the lance, of which he died. Tournaments having often produced such misfortunes, an envoy from the sultan, who assisted under Charles VII. at this military spectacle, said, like a wise man, 'If this is all in earnest, it is not enough; if it is jest, it is too much; but a noble warrior loves to brave danger even in amusement.' Duels were again so authorised, that Henry, at the beginning of his reign, was spectator of a duel where Chateigneraie, his favourite, lost his life. Struck with this accident, he forbid an abuse so contrary to humanity. Happy had it been for him if his wisdom had set the same bounds to tournaments.

The protestants were now burnt without mercy. Some members of Parliament were arrested for having advised to moderate the rigour of the ordinances. That spirit of softness, which Father Daniel calls

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 193

compassion out of season, would perhaps have produced better effects than such torments; many of the religionists, being drawn more from their hatred against the church than any other motive, attached themselves to error. They were compared to the first Christians persecuted under the Pagan emperors. They had enough to confound them, by having the example of their apostle Calvin opposed to them, who, in 1552, had burnt at Geneva the famous Michael Lewet, accused of not believing in the Trinity. It may likewise be conjectured, that they would themselves have become persecutors, if they had not wanted power; but it is no less true, that their number and obstinacy increased every day in the midst of these terrible executions. The court, the city, the country, all orders of people were infected with these flying errors. D. Andelot, brother of admiral de Coligny, interrogated by the king on his sentiments, had the hardiness to blaspheme against the mass. A violent fermentation denounced the storms which very soon broke out; the English for ever renounced the Catholic religion; queen Mary, for the re-establishment of it, had employed every species of torture; Elizabeth declared herself a Protestant, and had no difficulty in fixing the faith by parliament

194 ELEMENTS OF THE

ment and the chief consent of the nation. She was acknowledged for head of the English church; a whimsical title, which she constantly maintained as one of the prerogatives of the crown.

FRANCIS II.

THE short course of this reign, which was only seventeen months, hatched the seeds of a religious war, the most terrible scourge that the kingdom could have proved. The ambition of the great armed the fanaticism of the people; it resulted from infinite evils, the memory of which ought to inspire a lively horror for that spirit of cabal, which false zeal sometimes changes into frenzy. A king of thirteen years old, weak, and incapable of governing, mounted the throne, at a time when three powerful factions divided the court. Those of the princes of the blood were, Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, and his brother the prince of Conde; each of them having been for a long time offended at not being taken into business: that of Guise, to whom the quality of uncles to the king, the queen Mary Stuart being

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 195

being their niece, had given more credit than they had under the late reign: and lastly, that of the Montmorencys, the chief of whom, by his long services and by his dignity of constable, believed he had a right to pretend every thing.

The queen-mother, Catherine of Medicis, a princess of a supple artful genius, of an Italian policy, mistress of that understanding which had animated the soul of the dutchess of Valentinois her rival, immediately taking into consideration the pretensions of these different parties, very soon declared for the Guises, whom she hated, but whom she believed she had occasion for. Francis put at the head of the government the duke of Guise and the cardinal of Lorraine; the constable of Montmorency was disgraced, and the king of Navarre banished the court. If, on one side, it was impossible to conciliate so many different interests; on the other, by offending illustrious men, they drew on themselves powerful enemies. The prince of Conde, as lively and enterprising as his brother, was irresolute and phlegmatic, lost no time in plotting with Coligny and Andelot, nephews of the constable, declared partizans of Calvinism. It is to Coligny that the project of raising an insurrection among the Protestants is attributed.

Every thing seemed to lead towards a revolt; executions were not discontinued; an inquisition in France exercised the authority of a bloody tribunal, such as the nation detested. Ann of Bourg, a counsellor, clerk to the parliament of Paris, a magistrate distinguished by his birth, his manners and his integrity, was first hanged, and afterwards burnt at the greve for heresy. His death made him be looked on as a martyr. Enthusiasm and despair violently inflamed the minds of men. Experience very shortly shewed, that the Guises, in affecting a too rigid zeal for religion, had done no good either to their own interest or that of the cause they were engaged in. The famous confederacy of de Amboise was the first fruit of the hatred with which they had inspired the people. A gentleman of Perigouardin, named Renaudie, was the chief of a party, in which the prince of Conde (without appearing) was the soul. Several bodies of Protestants, conducted by brave captains, were to come from different provinces to Amboise, where they held their court; they were to seize on the king and the Guises, to force from them an edict for liberty of conscience, and to put into the hands of the prince of Conde all ministerial authority. The secret of the conspiracy was happily betrayed by a Calvinist advocate, to whom

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 197

Renaudie had the imprudence of confiding it; upon which the duke of Guise was made lieutenant-general of the kingdom. He took admirable measures for unravelling this plot, and for preventing the execution of it. On a certain day, the rebels arrived by different roads: they were met; they were defeated: several with Renaudie perished with sword in hand. Those whom they seized, except a small number, were put to the greatest tortures. Amboise became a kind of slaughter-house. The prince of Conde, who was come to court to wait the effect of the conspiracy, was arrested on vague suspicions, without the power of conviction. He justified himself in full council with much eloquence, and finished by declaring, that in spite of his title of prince of the blood, he defied to combat any one who dared to accuse him of a crime so atrocious. The duke of Guise, to whom this challenge was meant, perfectly possessed himself; he supported the innocence of the prince, and offered him his sword, if a duel was admitted as a proof. They restored him to liberty, and wrote to the king of Navarre and admiral Coligny, letters full of confidence, though they suspected them more than the prince. They began at the same time to moderate the edicts against the Calvinists. It

198 ELEMENTS OF THE

was ordained, that those alone should be punishable who were convicted of violence and sedition: nothing could be more just, and policy here agreed with the spirit of Christianity.

The celebrated Michael of the hospital, whose merit had raised him to the dignity of chancellor, had principles very different from those of the cardinal of Lorrain, and almost all the clergy: the cardinal was desirous of extirpating innovations, and establishing the tyranny of the inquisition. This would have been kindling a fire throughout France: to avoid so great a misfortune, the chancellor consented to interdict to the parliament, by the edict of the Romerantin, the knowledge of the crime of heresy, and to attribute it to the bishops; an edict which, according to the views of the cardinal, would render the searches after the heretics more exact and rigorous. This rigour, at the same time, inspired them with the sentiments of rebellion. In Dauphiny, in Provence, in Normandy, seditions were excited. ‘It is
 ‘ thus,’ says Daniel, ‘that a fire concealed
 ‘ under the cinders produces all at once
 ‘ a flame throughout the kingdom; and
 ‘ that the Catholics, who had often blamed
 ‘ the rigorous edicts of Francis I. and Henry
 ‘ II. had learned from fatal experience, that
 ‘ they

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 199

‘ they could not take too much precaution against novelties in matters of religion ; and that, independent of the zeal which every Catholic ought to have for the true faith, the love of their country was sufficient to make them neglect nothing which could contribute to stifle these errors in their birth.’ It is, without doubt, essential to stifle public plagues in their infancy ; but the historian might observe, that tortures have always produced a contrary effect ; that far from extinguishing a fire, it makes it burn with greater lustre ; that the more you would restrain the disturbers of the state, the more compassion you ought to have for the unhappy people, whose only crime is, being mistaken. Is then zeal for religion contrary to humanity ? Is it by flames that you must convince the understanding ? Must you burn millions of citizens only because they cannot be brought to think just as the church does ? and, Is it allowable for human justice, pitilessly to punish men for their secret opinions ? Far from it : it seemed rather good policy as well as true zeal to oppose barriers to the progress of Calvinism, without furnishing to the Calvinists pretences for a rebellion.

Elizabeth, by her conduct, equally firm and prudent, took much better methods

to support her authority and new religion. Mary Stuart having pretensions to the throne of England, they sent troops into Scotland, under pretence of defending the Catholics, but really to form enterprises against Elizabeth. That princess obliged the court to make a treaty, by which Mary promised not to bear on her escutcheons the arms of England, and the king to recal his troops from Scotland. The great men assembled at Fountainbleau, according to ancient custom, in order to find out remedies against the intestine divisions. It was there that Coligny presented a request, in the name of the Protestants, to obtain liberty of conscience, and the public exercise of their religion. The bishop of Valencia, John Montluc, counsellor for the state, was not afraid to speak in their favour. He attributed the public evils in a great measure to the ignorance and disorders of the clergy: he spared neither the pope nor the bishops, ‘ forty of whom,’ said he, ‘ have been ‘ seen at the same time in Paris, where ‘ they have been softened with pleasure, ‘ and forgot the duties of their function.’ He represented, that the rebels among the Calvinists ought to be severely punished; but that those who were faithful, and who proved it by their submission and patience, deserved

deserved to be tolerated. He concluded, that they ought to be left freely to their own belief, and only to be called to account when they held dangerous assemblies. The archbishop of Vienne was of the same opinion, and supported it by very strong reasons. The admiral harranged with more vehemence : he feared not the Guises, whom he particularly reproached with destroying the confidence between the sovereign and his people, by the numerous guard which surrounded his person. From the time of the conspiracy at Amboise, they had greatly increased the king's attendants; which, nevertheless, was nothing in comparison of what it is now. The duke of Guise, and the cardinal his brother, spoke according to their principles in matters of government. The result of this assembly was, the convocation of the states-general. The Guises were in hopes of drawing there the king of Navarre and the prince of Conde, whom the fear of some violence had hindered from coming to the assembly. The latter had openly declared himself a Calvinist : he was author of a new conspiracy, discovered like that of Amboise. The king of Navarre, though always fluctuating, appeared no less suspicious, nor less powerful. Francis sent for them to meet the states at

Orleans, promising them certain security from violence; but as soon as they arrived, the prince of Conde was put in prison, and his brother kept from his sight. They named commissaries to carry on the prosecution against the prince: he refused to answer them. He demanded being judged, according to the privileges of his birth, by the court of Peers; they, notwithstanding, condemned him to death. The chancellor of the hospital, and the count of Sancerre, generously refused to sign the warrant; he would, nevertheless, have been executed, (the Guises becoming more audacious from the time that they had been his enemies, thinking themselves sure of a complete triumph) if the sudden death of the king (at the age of seventeen) had not prevented it. He is called by some, the Guiltless King, on the account of the innocence of his manners: ‘A title more
 ‘glorious than any other,’ says Mezerai judiciously, ‘when it is founded on wisdom and virtue, and not on weakness of
 ‘mind.’

CHARLES IX.

THE death of the late king increased the heat of faction. Charles, his brother and successor, being only ten years old, Catherine of Medicis took on herself the government. Her well-directed policy managed all parties so as to make use of one against the other. She took care not to abandon the prince of Conde to the ambitious vengeance of the Guises: she reconciled herself with him, and with the king of Navarre, by releasing the first out of prison, and in procuring for the other the general lieutenantcy of the kingdom. These princes and the Guises seemed to deposite in her hands their mutual disagreements. More enemies than ever in their hearts, they acted together with all the outward appearance of benevolence. The constable of Montmorency was recalled. On his arrival at Orleans, he asked what was the meaning of so many guards, and if the king was not in safety in the midst of his subjects. Without any further explanation, he ordered the guards to withdraw, and was obeyed: an instance of what power a constable has.

The states held in this city produced no real good ; though the chancellor of the hospital, who, in opening them, had blamed the violent zeal of the religionists and Catholics, had disapproved of the injurious names of Papists and Hugonots *, and exhorted all the world to réunite for the common good ; yet they made but feeble efforts for the interest of the kingdom. The deputies of the nobility, and the third state, declaimed against the clergy: those of the clergy inveighed against the Calvinists, and demanded likewise, that whoever presented, or should present requests for obtaining the free exercise of that religion, should be punished as a heretic. This stroke was cast directly at the admiral de Coligny, who did himself justice for the injury.

It was essential to re-establish the finances. The debts amounted to forty-two millions, though Henry II. had found seventeen hundred thousand crowns in the treasury. It was proposed, that those who had taken care of the revenues of the king, should render him an account of them, in particular the cardinal of Lorrain ; but this demand

* It is likely, that the name of Hugonots, which was given in France to the reformed, was from a German word, which signifies allied by oath.

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 205

dropped without any effect. All the fruit of the states of Orleans was reduced to a celebrated ordinance, by which the administration of justice was entirely reserved to the people of the robe, and the pragmatic sanction re-established according to election ; an article which the court of Rome could not suffer to subsist for any length of time.

Whatever knowledge of mankind Catherine de Medicis was possessed of, it was yet impossible to manage people's hearts in such a manner as not very soon to produce fatal changes, where so many different passions and interests jarred with each other. The king of Navarre, already discontented, determined to quit the court. The constable followed him : their retreat increased the power of the Guises. The king, who neither did or said any thing but as his mother directed, ordered the constable to return. This old warrior yielded, notwithstanding the solicitations of his nephews : he hated novelty in matters of religion as much as Coligny favoured it : it was that which, perhaps, determined him to unite at last with the duke of Guise, contrary to his family compact, and even to the wish of his own heart. This change retained the king of Navarre ; he did not cease to solicit the queen-mother in favour of the Protestants, whom

whom he protected either through policy, through generosity, or through prejudice, without being openly of their party. Catherine had great desire of satisfying him, though she had always declared for the Catholics; she proposed the dangerous expedient of a public conference between the defenders of each religion. Nothing could appear more contrary to the interest of the Romish church, than the bringing the doctrine of it into dispute, nor more conformable to the desires of its adversaries, who found themselves by this means on some degree of level with their judges; but the vanity of the cardinal of Lorrain made this project be adopted: he flattered himself, that he should shine in the dispute, and confound the most famous ministers of the reformation. These conferences, so known under the name of the Treaty of Poissi, served only, as might have been foreseen, to render each party more firm in their sentiments. The cardinal of Lorrain on one side, and on the other Theodore Beze, a disciple of Calvin, as amiable as his master was severe, signalized their eloquence and their knowledge in this place. Pius IV. could not prevent an assembly, of which he apprehended the consequence. He had sent thither a legate, accompanied by father Laines, second general.

neral of the Jesuits. It was in this assembly that he harangued with a confidence which offended the queen. He said, addressing his speech to her, ‘ That neither
 ‘ she, or any other prince, ought to treat on
 ‘ affairs of religion, since such conferences
 ‘ were capable of altering the faith of the
 ‘ laity; and that they ought to abide by
 ‘ the judgment of the church, who had
 ‘ the sole right of determining.’ If Catherine de Medicis had given way to her resentment, it would, perhaps, have driven the Jesuits out of the kingdom; but the credit of Laines, the desires of the cardinals de Lorraine and de Tournou, made an act pass for their establishment, forming a college which went by the name of the Society of Jesus, and which should submit to the bishop of the diocese. Such was the weak beginning of a Society which very shortly extended itself all over the kingdom, until it became a body as powerful as celebrated. Rome could not oppose its enemies with more zealous defenders. According to Father Daniel, the treaty of Poissi on each side attributed the victory to themselves, weakening the preventions of the king of Navarre for the Calvinists. The legate acted more efficaciously on his heart, in making him hope for the restitution of Navarre. Where things are equal,
 interest

interest very soon fixes an undetermined character. This prince embraced with eagerness the side of the Catholics, from which he had been, till now, very distant. He united himself with the duke of Guise and the constable, who, with the marshal of Albon of St. Andrew, formed what was called the Triumvirate.

The queen-mother, who held it as her favourite maxim, that the art of reigning was that of dividing, could only balance so considerable a faction, by fortifying the contrary one. It was this motive which gave occasion for an edict for allowing liberty of conscience to the Protestants, on condition that they would hold their assemblies in the suburbs, and not in the city. An infinite number of people who had before feared to declare themselves, now threw off the mask. They began to preach; they deserted the convents; they insulted the Catholics, as they had insulted the Hugonots. Mankind always carry things to excess, and soon become furious in religious quarrels. The more they were reasoned with, the more they were inflamed, and there was but little wanting to cause a general insurrection. The massacre of Vassi was the signal of civil war. The duke of Guise passing through Vassi in his way to the country, some of his people
disturbed

disturbed a person who was preaching in a barn; from abuse they came at last to blows. The prince endeavoured to appease the tumult, and was wounded by a stone: his people, transported with fury, fell at once on the Hugonots, of whom they killed more than sixty. It is pretended on this occasion, that, as judge of the place, he recalled the edict of liberty of conscience, imprudently saying, putting his hand on his sword, 'See here the fruits of this detestable edict.' It was a word escaped in choler; and the massacre of Vassè was an accident which happened contrary to the intention of the duke of Guise. But the Protestants waited only an occasion for revolt. While the Catholics were loud in their praises of the prince of Lorraine, and the preachers compared him to Moses and Jehu, who, in shedding the blood of the impious, had consecrated their hands, and revenged the quarrel of the Lord, they meanwhile represented him as an execrable murderer, as the tyrant of the nation, and enemy of the laws. Both sides breathed nothing but war.

The king of Navarre and the Triumvirate, in order to assure themselves of the person of the king, forced him to quit Fountainbleau, and to follow them to Paris.

210 ELEMENTS OF THE

Paris. The queen-mother, solicited the prince of Conde to draw him out of their hands. This specious motive coloured rebellion. The religionists ran from all parts forming an army for the prince, and establishing their chief. Several considerable cities entered into a league; Conde ravaged Orleans, which he made his place of arms. Too feeble against the royalists, he treated with the queen of England, and delivered Havre to her, in order to purchase her succour. Rouen was taken and sacked by the Catholics; the king of Navarre was there killed by a shot from a hand-gun. 'This prince,' says a celebrated author, 'merits a place in history, only because he was the father of the great Henry IV.' As if it was not sufficient for France to tear itself to pieces, it was delivered as a prey to strangers. On each side troops of Germans entered it. The two armies at length met at Dreux, with an eagerness which characterises civil war. That which was the most singular in this day's work was the taking of the two generals, the prince of Conde and the constable of Montmorency. The marshal of St. Andrew perished there, after having much contributed to the victory of the royalists. It increased the reputation of the duke of Guise, who received still more honour

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 211

honour from the manner in which he treated the prince his prisoner. They both slept in the same bed. Conde assures us, that he never closed his eyes, and that the duke slept as tranquilly as if they had been the most intimate friends. Rarely is such greatness of soul joined with animosity and hatred; but there was nothing more wanting to the duke of Guise, in order to make him a model for heroes, than the being able to bound his ambition to the glory of signalizing his virtue. The siege of Orleans, which he undertook after the battle of Dreux, seemed to foretel the ruin of the rebels. One of the out-places had been already taken by assault, when this great man was assassinated by Poltrot, a young Protestant gentleman; the first example of frightful fanaticism which consecrates murder as an act of religion. Some historians relate, that another fanatical gentleman had made the same attempt at the siege of Rouen: but the duke avoided his design, demanding of him if he had not done him some evil; 'No,' replied he; 'but I would revenge my religion, of which you are the mortal enemy:' 'Very well,' replied the duke, 'if your religion teaches you to kill me, who have never offended you, from mine I learn to pardon; I forgive you: judge from
this

‘ this which of the two religions is best.’ It must be confessed, that this great reply was not conclusive, since as much might be said to assassins who were zealous for a good cause. Both sides made professions of the gospel, and equally delivered themselves to the fury of fanaticism. The infamy of the reformed is the having given birth to this monstrous destroyer : as for the rest, there was no less policy than zeal in the steps of the Guises ; since the duke and the cardinal, treating with the Protestant princes in Germany in 1562, flattered them with receiving into France the confession of Ausbourg : but whatever was the secret motive of their conduct, the Catholic religion, without them, had most likely been swallowed up in the kingdom.

The cowardly Poltrot being arrested after his crime, accused admiral Coligny, Beze, and some others, with having solicited him to it. Nothing was less likely than this accusation, if we may judge from the character of those who were the objects of it. The admiral cried out against the imposture, and instantly demanded, that they would suspend the execution of the assassin, till he should confront him ; but it was refused. As hatred strengthens the most unjust prejudices, Henry of Guise, the eldest son of the

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 213

the deceased, conceived from this moment the design of ruining Coligny.

A treaty of peace having at length terminated civil war, liberty of conscience was confirmed afresh. Catholics and Protestants appeared united in the fidelity which they owed their country; they took Havre by force, which queen Elizabeth had refused to return to the king. By thus forfeiting her word, she furnished a plausible reason for his not restoring Calais, as he had engaged by the treaty of Catau Cambresis. Though England had nothing more at heart than the restitution of this place, yet it did not prevent Elizabeth from concluding a peace with France.

From the beginning of Protestantism, the Catholics groaned for a general council, in the hope that it would dissipate heresy. Meanwhile, the divisions of the princes, and the policy of the popes, had put an obstacle between them and their desires; the popes fearing an assembly where they would not be masters, and who would, by the example of those of Bale and of Constance, exercise authority themselves. Nevertheless, that fear which kept in France a national council, more dangerous, perhaps, to the court of Rome, determined Pius IV. to reassemble the
council

council of Trent, began in 1545, and for a long time disused. It was ended in 1563, after having confirmed the dogmas, without convincing the innovators, who pretended to be admitted to council among their judges. They decried the work of the church as a production of school debates and cabals; but the Catholics at last were confirmed in their belief. The publication of the council was opposed in the kingdom; whether on account of the last edict of pacification, or whether because it gave decrees of discipline contrary to secular jurisdiction and Gallic liberty; whichever its was, it did not prevent their looking on the chief points of doctrine as articles of faith. This famous council was shook by violent contest on the subject of precedency, between the ambassadors of Charles IX. and Philip II. The pope decided in favour of the French king. Disputes on this and other political affairs made the business of religion for a long time be neglected; for men are always ready to give up their spiritual concerns when any temporal object employs their ambition and vanity.

Catherine of Medicis in vain flattered herself with keeping a just balance betwixt two parties resolved to destroy each other. She could neither conciliate nor satisfy them.

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 215

them. Her address and dissimulation excited their hatred; suspicious of Calvinism, and indifferent about religion, she affected the greatest exactness, in keeping to the ceremonies of the church. In taking a tour round the provinces with the king, she saw at Baïonne the queen of Spain, her daughter, and had frequent conferences with the duke of Albe, general of Philip II. This monarch shewed himself extremely zealous for the Catholics, though he had in reality no other design in it than his own interest: he continually animated the court of France against the sectaries, that he might himself profit by the discords and misfortunes of the kingdom. It was thought that conferences tended towards their ruin. A new accident confirmed this opinion. The Low Countries, (where, as well as other places, heresy had taken root) had rebelled against the king of Spain, who endeavoured to govern them in a despotic manner, depriving them of their privileges, and taking pains to submit them to the inquisition. He sent the duke of Albe at the head of an army to extirpate the rebels. Under pretence of necessary precautions, in case this army should attack France, Catherine raised troops, and made a reinforcement of six thousand Swiss. The Protestants did not
doubt

216 ELEMENTS OF THE

doubt but this was done with a design of oppressing them. From that time they complained bitterly of the court: their liberties were restrained; the violence of the Catholics were no more punished. The cruelties which the duke of Albe exercised in Flanders, made them dread a like persecution.

These subjects of complaint and inquietude gave occasion to a second civil war. The prince of Conde, by the counsel of Coligny, undertook to carry the king to Meaux. In becoming masters of his person, they would have been so of his government. The court prevented their design almost at the moment of execution. They employed the Swiss in a useful manner to draw him from such great peril. They received the monarch into their battalion, and conducted him to Paris, without the rebels being able to break through them. Some time after this, the constable attacked the prince of Conde at St. Dennis, with an army three times stronger than his own. This combat, the success of which was doubtful, finished the career of the illustrious Montmorency: he there received a mortal stroke, and preserved his firmness to the last. It is pretended that he said to his confessor, ‘ Do you think that I have lived forty-five years,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 217

‘ years, and do not know how to die a quarter of an hour.’ He had often in his mouth these words : ‘ One faith, one law, one king.’ His place was not filled up, because it gave too much power for a subject: the queen-mother chose rather to make the duke of Anjou, brother of Charles IX. lieutenant-general of the kingdom; a young prince of great hopes, whose reputation seemed to promise one day to grace the throne.

War was shortly concluded by a treaty not so honourable for the king, as advantageous for the Calvinists : but it was not long before it broke out with much greater violence. As grievances multiplied every day, notwithstanding reciprocal conventions, Catherine imagined that she ought cut the root of the evil by arresting the chiefs of the faction. Conde and Coligny, informed of her design, fled to Rochelle for refuge, the bulwark of the Protestants. This enterprize of the queen was looked on as a declaration of war. It occasioned the disgrace of the chancellor of the hospital: a magistrate who transcended all praise, according to the president Henault; but whose religion was suspected, because he was an enemy to excess. The Hugonots again took to arms, assisted by the English and

the Germans: the court revoked the edicts for liberty of conscience: ravages, hostilities, and massacres depopulated France, as if it had been overrun by barbarians. Two great French armies engaged at Iarnac, near Saintonge. The duke of Anjou carried the day: the prince of Conde was killed in cold blood by Montesquieu, after having given up his arms; a prince of extraordinary courage and genius, worthy of being put on the list with the most famous of his descendants; unhappy in having had the ambition of being chief of a faction; and more especially, in not having had time to make amends for his rebellion. Coligny, a man the most fertile in resources of any in the world, saved the French army, and made himself feared after the defeat of the prince of Conde, whose loss seemed to be the ruin of his party. Another prince of the blood succeeded him, born for a model to kings; it was the prince of Bearn, afterwards Henry IV. son of the queen of Navarre, Jane of Albret, as zealous a Protestant as her husband had been a weak Catholic. She herself presented her son to the vanquished, reanimating their hopes and their courage; and they declared the young Henry chief of the league.

The

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 219

The admiral and the intrepid Andelot put every thing in motion ; while the cardinal of Chatillon, their brother, (who was called the count of Beauvais, from the name of his bishoprick) since the time that he had abandoned the Romish church, was using every means in England for the interest of Calvinism. The Protestants of Germany, also signalized their zeal. The duke of Deuxponts was the head of it, surrounded by twelve thousand men, traversing almost all France to join the army of the admiral. The famous William prince of Orange, had great part in this enterprize, whose success was chiefly owing to the misunderstanding of the Catholic generals. Many measures and resources were taken, and prevented. Coligny raised the siege of Poitiers, and was defeated at Montcontour by the duke of Anjou ; but, always firm and courageous in misfortune, he supported his part in such a manner, that after four battles lost, he was still in a condition of resisting the royal power. The prince of Bearn, who was only thirteen years old, looked on him as his father; his mind was formed by him, and appeared worthy of such a master. Instead of pursuing the dispersed rebels, the duke of Anjou imprudently stopt to make sieges, and gained but little by the victory. Poi-

tou, Saintonge, Bearn, and Guienne, were drenched in blood.

The fury of these two parties increased every day, and the Protestants refused to lay down their arms but on advantageous conditions; which they obtained by the treaty of St. Germain in Laie. They were not only allowed the liberty of preaching, but were granted four cities of safety, among which was Rochelle: they were declared capable of undertaking offices; they were permitted to object, in their law-suits with the Catholics, to any certain number of judges, without assigning a reason. This unhopèd-for peace was a triumph for them. In the views of Catherine de Medicis it was most likely only a fatal deception: she was willing to destroy by perfidy those whom she could conquer no other way. Charles IX. having imbibed her maxims, trained to dissimulation, inclinable to cruelty, perfectly seconded her design. The most atrocious wickedness was covered under the finest appearances. In order to draw the chiefs of the Hugonot party to court, the king offered his sister Margaret in marriage to the young prince of Bearn. The queen of Navarre, charmed with this mark of reconciliation, was desirous of concluding the treaty. Coming to France, she was loaded with honours and

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 221

and caresses. After the first interview, Charles IX. asked his mother, if he had not played his part well: 'Yes,' replied Catherine; 'but this is only a beginning, it must be well finished.' He replied, calling God to witness it, 'That he would draw them all into her nets.' The most difficult was to catch the admiral; this wise man was not to be tempted by a seducing appearance. The Gueux (which was the name that was given to the religionists of the Low Countries) had again rebelled against Spain, and the prince of Orange, William of Nassau, took advantage of the rigours of a despotic government, to raise his subjects, and to found the republic of the United Provinces. In these circumstances, the king appeared disposed to make war with Philip II. The violent zeal of this monarch, and his strait alliance with the Guises, made him infinitely odious to the reformed. Proposing to Coligny a war of this kind, and offering him the command, he was weak enough to take it, notwithstanding his just cause for hatred. He appeared before Charles IX. who received him with great testimonies of friendship, whose head he had but a little while before put up at an opprobrious price.

Meanwhile a sudden death carried off the queen of Navarre. A report of her being poisoned was every where spread without any proof to support it. The admiral was exhorted on all sides to accuse the count. A Calvinist captain one day taking his leave of him, was asked by him why he retired into the country; 'Because,' says he, 'we are here overpowered with careffes: I had rather save myself among fools, than perish with those who believe themselves too wise.' The admiral laughed at these false terrors and panics; so true it is, that the wisest of us suffer ourselves to be deceived by that which flatters our passions.

At length the prince of Bearn, who was now called King of Navarre from the death of his mother, arrived, with the prince of Conde, his cousin, who was pretty near the same age with himself. The seventeenth of August was fixed for the ceremony of his marriage with Margaret of France. The following days were to be spent in feasts and pleasures: all hatred seemed to be at an end; but the fire was concealed under the cinders. The admiral going home on foot to his hotel on the twenty-second, about one o'clock in the morning, after having been playing

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 223

playing with the king at tennis, was wounded by a ball from a hand-gun. 'Behold,' says he, 'the fruit of my reconciliation with the duke of Guise.' This duke had actually sworn to revenge the death of his father on him, whom he believed to be the author of it. Charles, at the news of the assassination, appeared transported with rage; he went to the admiral and promised him a striking vengeance. Was this dissimulation or sincerity? we can only judge from his actions.

Meanwhile the Protestants murmured, and highly threatened Catherine of Medicis, while the secret council of the monarch meditated the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The duke of Guise was charged with the execution, whom they would have stopped after he had wounded the admiral. Orders were given in a short space of time, without the secret transpiring. The night of the twenty-third or twenty-fourth of August began this frightful butchery. Coligny was one of the first victims: Guise, his mortal enemy had his door forced open; and Besme, a domestic of the duke's, gave him the first stroke. 'Young man,' said the admiral to him with a tranquil air, 'thou owest respect to my white locks; but do what thou wilt, thou canst only abridge life a

‘few days.’ A number of lords and gentlemen were murdered in the Louvre; the Catholics filled Paris with carnage: several, to revenge their particular quarrels, murdered those of the same persuasion with themselves, whom their hate had transformed into Hugonots. Children, old men, pregnant women, all fell beneath the sword of the assassins. An artisan boasted, that he had himself killed four hundred people. The massacre lasted several days; and it well known, that Charles himself shot with a long gun after the unhappy people who took to flight. The corpse of Coligny, after being abusively treated by the populace, and hung on the gibbet of Montfaucon, was to him an agreeable spectacle. Somebody saying that he smelled offensively, ‘The corpse of an enemy always smells well,’ replied the king. A word borrowed from Vitellius, and equally odious in the mouth of either one or the other. It had been deliberated if the king of Navarre and the prince of Conde should be comprised in this massacre. The quality of princes of the blood saved their lives. Charles commanded them to renounce Calvinism. The first made some little resistance; the second appeared at first inflexible. ‘Mass, Death, or the Bastile,’ said the king one day to him
in

in a rage. Fear decided his conscience. These forced conversions seldom last longer than the motive which produces them. Paris was not the only theatre of this tragedy; the order for massacring the Calvinists having been sent all over the kingdom, was executed in several places with the same fury. A celebrated historian reckons about sixty thousand Frenchmen who were murdered under pretence of religion. At this day the names of some governors of provinces who courageously refused to be the butchers of their citizens are blessed. A thing almost as strange as the massacre is, that the king was not ashamed of taking on himself all the odium. He declared in a bed of justice, that it had been done by his orders: he there exposed his reasons. The first president, Christopher de Thou, praises his prudence, supposing a conspiracy formed against the royal house.

The parliament blasted the memory of Coligny, giving the remains of his corpse to the hangman, and ordering, that there should be a procession every year to thank God for the deliverance of the kingdom. Their heated spirits had not as yet reflected on the atrociousness of this barbarity. It was celebrated at Rome and

in Spain by pompous panegyrics, and in France by a medal, the inscription of which was, *Pietas armavit justitiam*, Piety armed by justice. Happily we know in our days, that piety can never be bloody, nor justice barbarous; and we are not afraid, by the example of a wise prelate, to paint the massacre of Bartholomew as an execrable action, which never had, nor we hope through the mercy of God, ever will have its likeness. Mr. Henault relates here a story well worth remarking: There were found in the papers of the admiral, advice to the king to take care in assigning the apenage of his brothers, not to give them too great authority. The queen-mother had this article read before the duke of Alençon, the youngest brother of Charles IX. who she knew was greatly afflicted at the death of Coligny. ‘This
‘was your good friend,’ says she to him,
‘only think of the counsel which he gave
‘to the king:’ ‘I know not,’ replied
the duke, ‘whether he had any strong
‘affection for me or not; but this I know,
‘that such counsel could never be given
‘by a man who was not a faithful sub-
‘ject to his majesty, and truly zealous for
‘the state.’ If this anecdote does some
honour to admiral Coligny, nothing could
better

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 227

better efface the notion of his being tainted with rebellion: a great man armed against the laws is always a scourge.

It is shocking to see a country torn to pieces by those who ought to place their glory in its support: but what a dreadful lesson does Providence seem to give to the ambitious, in the persons of all those heads of party, so distinguished by their rank or by their merit. They every one perished through violence. Francis of Guise, Lewis of Conde, and the admiral, were unworthily assassinated; the constable of Montmorency, the king of Navarre, Anthony of Bourbon, and the marshal of St. Andrew, were killed in civil war. Every one of them endeavouring to overthrow government, tormented themselves while living; and by the same means sunk themselves down to the tomb. The effect of St. Bartholomew was quite contrary to what they had hoped. Instead of extirpating Calvinism, it rendered its partizans more furious. Experience has proved a hundred times, that religious zeal is irritated by bloody persecutions; and that they give it strength by reducing it to despair.

Charles IX. determined to take again into his own possession those places of safety which he had given to the Calvinists. They refused to return them; protesting,

that after the treachery which they had experienced when all seemed peace, they could not trust to the court; and that they had rather perish in defence of their religion and liberty, than by the hand of an executioner. Thus the massacre served no other purpose than to rekindle war. The duke of Anjou lost near twenty-four thousand men at the siege of Rochelle. This place supported itself under nine grand assaults, and an infinite number of smaller attacks. The women used their endeavours as much as the men to repulse the assailants. The people of Rochelle at length obtained a capitulation which left them masters of the place; in which was comprehended Nismes and Montaubon. It was stipulated, that the king should put in governors, but without a garrison; the citizens having hitherto governed themselves.

This memorable siege was less astonishing than that of the little city of Sancerre. Never, since the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans, has such a resistance been known: the besieged, destitute of all provisions, eat every thing that was most disgusting among animals, and were at length reduced to eat the bones and flesh of the dead, parchments, and some say, their own children. This was not done by soldiers, of whom they had very few; but citizens,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 229

citizens, artisans, husbandmen, animated by an invincible fanaticism. They submitted, in a tolerable condition, after a long siege.

The reputation of the duke of Anjou, and the intrigues of Montluc, the bishop of Valencia, had made the former be elected king of Poland. Charles IX. extremely jealous of his brother, was ravished on this occasion, at having him at such a distance from him: the more he pressed his departure, the more the duke feared to quit France, where he hoped very soon to reign; nevertheless, he was obliged to go. The queen-mother, who had for him a particular affection, took the care of his interest upon herself: she always preserved her authority, whatever desire the king had to free himself from the yoke. The troubles of the state kept him still in dependence. The taste for faction was again renewed; they formed themselves afresh, under the name of Malcontents, or Politics, which put religion out of the question: they talked only of reforming the kingdom; and above all, of lowering the pride of the Guises, whose power had now scarcely any bounds. The duke of Alençon, the king's brother, of a turbulent mind, light and inconsiderate, put himself at the head of this cabal, which
was

was excited by Montmorency; the Protestants entered into it. Thus, when the king of Navarre and the prince of Conde were much discontented with the court, a plot for raising these princes was discovered. A number of lords were imprisoned, and the king of Navarre and duke of Alençon arrested. The fury of war was again beginning in the provinces, when the king died of a violent disorder at twenty-four years of age, without male heirs, after having declared Catherine of Medicis regent, until the return of the king of Poland, his brother and successor.

Charles IX. had estimable qualities, understanding, judgment, activity, and courage; and perhaps he would have been a great king if nature had not been depraved in him. The marshal de Retz, a Florentine, abused his favour by corrupting him; and his mother inspired him with that detestable policy which Machiavel had taught in Italy. Born with a violent temper, he had still hardened the natural fierceness of his soul, by the custom of hunting: deep dissimulation, joined to the height of cruelty, made him capable of commanding the massacre of St. Bartholomew; nevertheless, it must be said, he loved letters and cultivated poetry. Daurat, Ronsard, and Baif, were honoured by his good graces; and

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 231

he made his preceptor, Amiot, (the translator of Plutarch) grand almoner, whose merit, perhaps, would have been lost in indigence under another reign. He is not the first example of a bloody prince who has had a taste for literature. The fineness of the understanding does not change the bent of the heart; a thing much more singular is, that our best laws were enacted amidst such barbarities and disorders: we are indebted for them to the chancellor of the hospital, who does honour to reason and justice, says Mr. Henault, by thinking them more strong than armed men; and that they would have imprinted the knowledge of right in men's hearts, if they had known how to value it. The ordinances made by this great man are full of deep thinking; they would have established peace and order in the most solid manner, if the rage of faction would have suffered itself to have been so happily bridled.

The year hitherto beginning on Easter-eve, a custom subject to many inconveniencies, this being a moveable feast, the ordinance of Roussillon in 1564 fixed the beginning of the year on the first of January. The parliament did not consent to this reformation till 1567; so much does custom sometimes prevail over reason. In order to form an idea of the manners of the court,

court, which necessarily has an influence over the whole nation, we must unite together all kinds of disorders carried to the greatest excess; superstition, atheism, wickedness and debauchery, treachery and cruelty. Catherine of Medicis had great faith in judicial astrology. Nothing was more common than witchcraft, by which they believed that they should defeat their enemies. Unfortunately they joined to it a means more efficacious, I mean poison. All these plagues came principally from Italy. The restoration of letters, by refining men's minds, seemed to have disclosed these pernicious talents. Impiety on one side, and heresy on the other, corrupted the happiness of society. The greatest part of the people were ignorant of the true principles which ought to regulate the conduct of each particular, and the government of the state. At the same time, the nobility were in general so ignorant, that they were obliged to send an express for two gentlemen to converse in Latin with the Polish ambassadors: nevertheless, Michael Montagne, a gentleman of Gascony, equally distinguished for his wit and knowledge, peaceably cultivated philosophy. The nervous stile and manly thoughts of his essays, are still admired; a useful work for the knowledge of the human

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 233

man heart, but where religion and manners are not always sufficiently respected.

Under this reign something happened in America which is worth taking notice of: admiral Coligny had sent a colony to establish itself in Florida; the Spaniards were not willing to have such neighbours, as if they had exclusive rights over this immense hemisphere: they surprised the French, and massacred them all, though there was no war at that time betwixt the two nations. The court of Madrid approved this cruel piece of injustice; that of Paris could not, or would not revenge it. A gentleman of Gascony, named Dominick Gourgues, undertook to do it without assistance: he sold his estate in 1567; he equipped some ships, attacked the Spaniards, took from them their forts, and hung up those Spaniards who fell into his hands; and finding a monument of their expedition, where they boast of having extirpated the inhabitants of the former colony, not as Frenchmen, but as Lutherans, Gourgues had the recital of his victory engraved on the same monument, where he said, he had thus treated the Spaniards, not as Spaniards, but as traitors, robbers, and murderers. Far from being recompensed at his return, he ran the risk of his life. The Guises, managing

234 ELEMENTS OF THE

ging for Philip II. demanded a prosecution against him. Injustice was not suffered to be carried so very far. Elizabeth, who knew better how to employ merit, offered this brave captain the command of an English fleet. He was preparing for his departure when he died. Can we help observing how much these words, 'but as 'Lutherans,' delineates the spirit of an age where religion was a pretence for the most monstrous horrors !

HENRY III.

IT is astonishing, that Henry III. in his twenty-third year should ascend the throne, after two of his brothers, Francis II. and Charles IX. It is still more so, that this prince, who had acquired a brilliant reputation when only duke of Anjou, should render himself so despicable when he became king. Grief had devoured him in Poland ; impatient of returning to his country, and foreseeing that the Polonese would put an obstacle to his return, he fled from them at night, like a captive who breaks from his chains. The emperor, the Venetians, and the wisest among the French,

French, in vain advised him to endeavour to manage the Calvinists, and once more establish calmness in a kingdom which had been agitated by factions and murders. He at once declared himself for vigour, as he had done at the time of the massacre; but it was not long before he had cause to repent it. The little city of Livron, which he endeavoured to take by force, resisted him with insult. ‘Approach, assassins,’ cried they from the top of the walls, ‘you will not find us asleep as you did the admiral.’ In the beginning of his reign, he shewed himself what he was, an enemy to business, giving himself seriously up to lightness and trifles, employing himself with some young lords his minions in the most infamous debauches, and increasing the scandal of his manners by the grimace of devotion. What could one think of a king, who, covered with the most abominable vices, affected to go in procession with a sack over his shoulders, among the community of penitents, and to distinguish himself by those practices so little known in France before his time.

The duke of Alençon, to whom he had given liberty, as well as to the king of Navarre, conspired against his life. Henry pardoned him, being his brother. Afterwards, on some fresh suspicions, he con-
 jured

jured the king of Navarre to kill him, telling him, that he would, by this crime, become presumptive heir to the crown; but he was incapable of so black a deed, and refused to lend a hand towards it. The common discontent united these two princes, though often quarrelling through a natural antipathy, and disputes on intrigues of gallantry. The duke of Alençon fled from the court. The confederacy of the Politics and the Protestants acquired new force, by having the king's brother at their head. He was very soon followed by the king of Navarre, who, by the example of the prince of Conde, retracted the abjuration which had been forced from him under the late reign. The massacre of St. Bartholomew had not made any real good Catholics. The German troops had already come to the assistance of the confederates. The French found the necessity of making peace; and it was not now a time that they could do it with honour, so that they were obliged to make such as the faction exacted from them. The greatest advantages were gained to the Calvinists by the pacific edict; entire liberty of conscience, and public exercise of the pretended reformed religion (these were the terms of the edict). A court of justice was formed, where one half were Catholics, and the other Protestants,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 237

Protestants, in the eight parliaments of the kingdom *. The memory of the admiral reinstated the chiefs of the confederacy, acknowledged for good and faithful subjects. The apenages of the duke of Alençon was increased, who, from that time, became duke of Anjou: and, to fill up the measure of their disgrace, they bought the departure of the Germans, who had been given to them as hostages, and who were suffered with impunity to pillage the provinces as they retired to their own country. These were the consequences of St. Bartholomew, to which Henry III. had not a little contributed. Never did heresy appear so triumphant, nor government so debased.

The indignation and zeal of the Catholics produced a still more fatal evil: the

* From the time that the parliament had been fixed at Paris, and they had been convinced of the necessity of laws, and the advantage of tribunals to distribute justice, one parliament only could not take in every province; so that they afterwards successively established several others: that of Toulouse was created by Philip the Handsome, and many more by different kings. Their wisdom sometimes failed them in commotions; but their establishment, as is observed by Loiseau, saved the kingdom from being torn to pieces, and has maintained it entire: Laws are the firmest ramparts of a state.

holy

holy league took birth, for so they stiled that dangerous confederacy, the pretended motive of which was, the defence of the church, the king, and the state; but whose principal design was, to overturn government, assassinate the king, and dishonour the church. The cardinal of Lorrain dying in 1574, was said to have given the rough draught of this plan; a work worthy of his excessive ambition. The Hugonots, animated by a republican spirit, had formed the like enterprises against sovereign authority. Those of the Catholics became in some degree a general revolt. In an article of association, which is recorded by an authentic author, it is said, that for common defence they proceeded, whether by the voice of justice or arms, without exception of any one person: the form of address to Picardy, or the league, took place; the substance of which was, that whoever should refuse to enter into it, should be reputed an enemy to God, a deserter of his religion, a rebel to his king, a traitor and betrayer of his country; should be abandoned by every body, and exposed to all the injuries and oppressions which could be offered him. Henry of Guise, surnamed the Gashed, because of a wound he had received in the face, in fighting with the Calvinists, strongly animated the cabal,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 239

cabal, without as yet appearing at the head of it. It made a rapid progress; the religionists were insulted in several places, and the court, notwithstanding the edict of pacification, could scarcely think of restraining these violences. Not being able to counterbalance one side against the other, they openly declared to the states of Blois, against those whom they hoped to find the easiest overpowered, and revoked the edict which was granted to the Protestants. A small matter was sufficient to furnish a new pretence for war: the king, by an inconceivable policy, authorised the league, declaring himself the chief; he took the head of a faction formed against himself. Such was the fruit of the states of Blois; civil war, without the assistance of money to support themselves against it. They had scarce taken to arms before the king desired a peace. A new edict of pacification confirmed the former one in several points; and new places of safety were allotted for the Calvinists.

In this short interval of tranquillity, Henry III. instituted the order of the Holy Ghost, that of St. Michael being fallen into such disgrace, that it was stiled the Collar of all Beasts. The Catholics only could be admitted into this new order. It was a bait to draw in the Protestants; but

but the king, despised by the former, because of his scandalous conduct, and detested by the latter, as one of the authors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, could fall upon no method of recalling the affections of his people, and re-establishing his authority. He lavished every thing for his own luxury and that of his minions. He was in want of all that was necessary for the support of the state. Both parties saw in his person a weak debauched prince, and despicable hypocrite; and both sides braved him in their turns.

As the court was seldom faithful in its engagements, the king of Navarre thought no more of them; he renewed the war, and acquired great reputation at the siege of Cahors. On the other side, the duke of Anjou, (formerly the duke of Alençon) whose humour could not suit itself with that of Henry his brother, fled privately away, and endeavoured to make an advantage to himself of the troubles in the Low Countries, where the Spanish dominion daily declined. All the blood which had been spilt by the orders of Philip II. served only to inflame the people's hatred against him, and that of the Protestants against the church. The prince of Orange, whom he had proscribed, and whose head he had put up at a certain price, at length determined the states solemnly

lemnly to declare to him, that he had lost the principality, having violated the privileges of the people, contrary to his oath: for this cause, added the proclamation, the states, following the permission which king Philip himself gave them when he was acknowledged prince of Flanders, and being free and disengaged from the obedience which they then swore to him, chuse for their prince, of their own will, from their own good judgment, Francis of Valois, duke of Alençon, brother to the king of France. The king approved the election; but notwithstanding the genius and prudence of the duke of Anjou, he was not able to support his authority. Dissatisfied that the United Provinces put any restraint on him, and jealous of the prince of Orange, who had taken upon himself the place of absolute master, he endeavoured to ravage the principal cities. This enterprize ruined his affairs; the citizens of Anvers repulsed the French, and made a great carnage. This unfortunate prince was obliged to return into France, having lost, by his own fault, a state where he might have been happy, had he shewn any respect for national liberty. He flattered himself with marrying the queen of England, from whom he had received a ring, as a pledge of her

Vol. II. M faith.

faith. It was the custom of Elizabeth, to encourage the hope of princes who were desirous of reigning with her. She cheated the duke of Anjou as she had many others; a prey to chagrin, he died in 1584. The prince of Orange having been assassinated by a fanatic, the new republic offered to acknowledge the king for sovereign. An offer so advantageous was not accepted. Under a weak government, all opportunities are lost without being made any use of.

It now appeared, that the holy league, coloured with an appearance of zeal, was in reality nothing more than a conspiracy of the principal chiefs against the royal authority, and the fundamental laws of the kingdom. The death of the duke of Anjou disclosed the true design of those who were engaged in it. The king of Navarre being now looked on as presumptive heir to the crown, they affected more than ever to groan for the dangers of the church; for the certain triumphs of heresy, in case an heretical prince should succeed. Henry himself was not spared in their invectives. The pecuniary edicts with which he had loaded the people, his prodigality to unworthy favourites, his monstrous debauches, his cabals, his frequent processions, the sack with which he covered himself,

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 243

himself, his discipline, and the rosary which he wore at his girdle, furnished ample matter for satire. In order to make him the more ridiculous, they painted him as a favourer of heresy, a secret friend of the king of Navarre, and a declared protector of the Genevans and religious Flemings. The greatest part of the ecclesiastics and monks, transported by a blind zeal, blew up the fire of rebellion. They easily drew after them a credulous and ecclesiastic people. The duke of Guise set every spring to work with as much prudence as activity. A Jesuit of Lorrain, named Matthews, was one of his principal agents; he was stiled the Courier of the League: Gregory XIII. whom he was commissioned to consult with in a case of conscience, whether the motive for supporting the Catholic religion was sufficient to dispense with the obedience due to the sovereign, decided verbally, contrary to the ancient maxims of Rome, that war in this case was permitted against the king. The scruples of tender consciences being lulled by this reply, they had nothing to do but with one voice to cry out for arms. The fanatic ambition of Henry of Guise aspired to the throne; but he knew how to cast a veil over his designs. He per-

M-2

suaded

suaded the cardinal of Bourbon, uncle to the king of Navarre, that his nephew, being a heretic, was incapable of reigning; that he, therefore, ought to look on himself as heir to the crown. This old simple prelate easily imbibed the prejudices of dominion; he suffered himself to be dazzled by a chimerical hope, which not a little redoubled the ardour of his zeal. All on a sudden, a manifesto appeared, in which he was declared the chief of the league, exposing the intentions of the leaguers. The names of the pope, of the emperor, of the king of Spain, and almost all the catholic sovereigns, supported this declaration; which declared, That the whole confederacy had united in an oath of keeping a strong and armed hand, until such time as the church was re-established in its dignity, the Catholic religion supported, the people satisfied, and the new taxes abolished, &c. After this signal of war, the people of the league very soon took to the field: Henry, though in a condition to dissolve them, was satisfied to make his apology; he invited the king of Navarre to change his religion, and to second him in their common interest. The king replied, That he must first be convinced of the error of his own religion; that he was not obstinate in that article; but that

that he must wait the conviction of his conscience.

The court had neither prudence nor courage. Catherine of Medicis, whether through affection for the league, or whether from a desire of temporising, increased the terror of the king. They made at Nemours, a treaty of peace very advantageous to the leaguers, and very likely to make the Protestants rebel. They despoiled the latter of all that had been given them; they gave to the former all that rebels could wish for, in order entirely to destroy the royal power. The cardinal of Bourbon, and the princes of the house of Guise, obtained guards, cities of safety, money, and an authentic approbation of all that they had done against the state.

Meanwhile the league lost its credit at Rome. Sextus V. that fierce and enterprising pope, the son of a husbandman, bred in a cloister, foreseeing, through the force of pontifical artifice, the danger of this cabal, looked on them as undermining the religion of the kingdom. Though he spoke of them with contempt, he nevertheless furnished them with arms, publishing a famous bull, by which he excommunicated the king of Navarre and the

246 ELEMENTS OF THE

prince of Conde, as relapsed heretics, enemies of God and the church; calling them a bastard generation, and detestable to the illustrious house of Bourbon; declaring them deprived of all their rights, incapable of succeeding to sovereignty, and dispensing the subjects of the king of Navarre from their oath. The parliament, displeased at this attempt, made it matter of the strongest remonstrances: a counsellor was advised to burn this injurious bull. The two princes called together a free council. The king of Navarre, in his protestation, gave the lie to Sextus V. and added, That if the former kings and princes, his ancestors, were capable of chastising the temerity of such gallants as he the pretended pope Sextus, when they forgot their duty, and passed the bounds of their vocation, by confounding temporal and spiritual things together, he hoped that himself, who was nothing inferior to them, should, through the mercy of God, be able to revenge the injury done to his king, to his house, to his blood, and to all the courts of parliament of France, &c. He had the courage to affix this placart in Rome itself. The pope admired his firmness: but the leaguers prevailed for the bull. It was their interest to appear to attack only the enemies of the church.

Their

Their cause thus became, in the eyes of the people, the cause of religion. Henry III. was forced to raise troops against the king of Navarre and the Calvinists. War tore the provinces to pieces without producing any great event. They were in want of resources; and the parliament rejected the pecuniary edicts, by which the exhausted French had already been made too miserable. Catherine of Medicis still attempted negotiation: she had a conference at Saintonge with the king of Navarre; she had taken with her some gallant women of the court; a means of seduction which had often succeeded with him. The prince seeing them, said to the queen, 'There is nothing of this that will do.' 'What then,' replied she, 'have I taken useless pains? I, whose sole desire is repose and quiet.' 'Madam,' replied the king, 'I have nothing to answer for on that account: it is not my fault that you do not sleep quietly in bed; but you prevent me from sleeping in mine. The trouble that you take pleases and nourishes you; repose is the greatest enemy of your life.' The duke of Nevers represented to him, that he had not the power of raising a tax in Rochelle. He fiercely replied, 'I do

‘at Rochelle all that I desire, because I desire to do nothing but what I ought.’ This speech may give us a high idea of Henry IV. We shall thus develope him, until, according to the remark of M. de Voltaire, that name, so celebrated, is become his proper name. As he persisted in not abjuring Calvinism, purely from a motive of interest, a conference suspended hostilities for some time.

A frightful event increased the hatred of the Catholics against the religionists, and completed an unheard-of explanation of government. Mary Stuart, queen of Scots, after the death of her husband, Francis II. had retired to her own dominion. Elizabeth, who saw in her a dangerous rival, diligently fomented a rebellion among the Scotch protestants, more furious than any other, because they were more fanatic. The weaknesses of their queen, (for it is difficult, perhaps, fully to justify her from gallantry) when we weigh the testimonies for and against these foibles, might, it is probable, be a circumstance to irritate their fanatics, and make them drive her from her kingdom. In the year 1568, she sought an asylum with her enemy, Elizabeth, less generous than politic, kept her in prison ten years, and with an

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 249

an inexcusable cruelty, at last cut off her head, under pretence of insurrections which she had occasioned in the kingdom. It is certain, that the Catholics had formed some conspiracies against Elizabeth; but what right could the queen of England have over the life of the queen of Scots? This last met her death with a truly Christian heroism.

Henry III. could neither revenge his brother's widow, nor the rights of his royalty: he had every thing to fear for himself. There was a new faction sprung up at this time infinitely dangerous, called the League of Sixteen; thus named, because they who composed it, were distributed through the sixteen quarters of Paris. It existed two years, straitly united in a grand confederacy, and formed the design, not only of subjecting the king, but what was still more, of dethroning him. After having been advertised of this plot, he was neither more active nor more quicksighted. The leaders, whom he with reason looked on as his mortal enemies, obliged him to continue a war against the presumptive heir of the crown: he confided the command of the army to the duke of Joyeuse, one of his favourites, whose brilliant qualities gilded over the vices which he pos-

250 ELEMENTS OF THE

fessed in common with the court. This lord was defeated by Henry IV. at the battle of Coutras. The difference of the armies seemed to foretel the event of their conquest: the one, full of young nobility, brave and impetuous; but without discipline, softened by luxury, covered with gilded armour and magnificent accoutrements: the other, composed of true warriors, simply clad, hardened by fatigue, and who thought of shining only by their exploits. Before the battle, Henry said to the princes of Conde and Soisson, 'Remember that you are of the blood of Bourbon; and as God lives, I will shew you to-day, that I am your elder.' 'And we,' replied they, 'will make you confess that you have good juniors.' In less than an hour the victory was decided. Never had the king of Navarre shewn so much conduct, or so much valour; he distinguished himself still more by his moderation, taking care of the wounded, sending back the prisoners without ransom, and appearing as worthy of love as the league had represented him deserving of hatred: he rendered funeral honours to the duke of Joyeuse, who had been killed in cold blood after the battle. These kind of murders, the crimes of fanaticism, dis-
honoured

honoured each party in their turn. The duke of Guise, on the other side, signalled himself against the Germans, who came to the succour of the Hugonots: their army consisted of eight thousand Reîtres, and of five thousand Lansquenets, to whom they had joined sixteen thousand Swiss. The German cavalry were called Reîtres, and the infantry Lansquenets. This general, in the end, endeavoured to dissipate them. The enthusiasm and insolence of the leaders now redoubled; all Paris raised their idol to the clouds; the pulpits resounded with his praises, and the preachers affected to lower the king, by crying up the duke. These words, which they repeated with enthusiasm, 'Saul killed his thousands, but David his ten thousands,' became the universal voice of the populace; their minds were so strangely fascinated, that the Sorbonne decided, in a secret assembly, that it was in their power to take the government out of the hands of a prince whom they found not capable of governing, as they would the administration from a guardian whom they had reason to suspect: a maxim dictated by the sixteen, and which they pretended to put in practice. The death of the prince of Conde, poisoned at St. John of

Angeli, increased their confidence; their proceeding with impunity, was a proof how much they were to be feared.

Meanwhile, the duke of Guise constantly employed his mind on great designs. While the king remained buried in a stupid lethargy, the duke assembled at Nancie the chiefs of the league, and the princes of his house. They contrived among them to make new demands on Henry; they sent him a memorial, begging him to banish from court those suspected people, whom they should name to him; to publish the council of Trent; to re-establish the tribunal of the inquisition in the principal cities, and to commit the exercise of them to strangers rather than to Frenchmen, &c. These last demands filled up the measure of rebellion. The king dissembled, resolving to make an example of the sixteen. With this design, he assembled some troops, and sent an order to the duke of Guise, who was then at Soissons, forbidding him to return to Paris. He would have given twenty-five crowns to a courier to have carried this letter; but none was to be found, and it was sent by the post. At the moment that they were waiting the event, the duke of Guise arrived. He presented himself to the king, swearing

ing that he had received no orders to the contrary. Two days afterwards, Henry IV. entered with the Swifs to secure the city. The seditious citizens took to arms, forming a barricade to the Louvre, surrounding, or disarming the soldiers; the king fled, and abandoned his capital to the rebel duke, who would undoubtedly have seized on his person, if he had not apprehended making himself too odious by such violence. The Parisians adored him; Paris and the Bastile were at his disposal; and he had very soon re-established order throughout. Achilles of Harlai, first president of the council, whom he visited, more enraged than affrighted at his triumph, said to him, "It is great pity when the servant drives out the master: there remains nothing more for me than to give my soul to God, my heart to my king, and leave my body in the hands of the wicked, who may do with it whatsoever they will." Thus this illustrious magistrate, by his fidelity and virtue, raised himself far superior to the criminal hero.

The greatest part of the members of parliament partook the sentiments of their chief. There remained now scarcely any other resource. The Parisians very soon
blushed

254 ELEMENTS OF THE

blushed at their excess, and sent a deputation to the monarch, demanding pardon, and the parliament solicited mercy of the people. Henry at first behaved with sufficient firmness; but he afterwards, according to custom, granted to the rebels all they could wish. The edict of reunion, signed at Rouen, says, ‘ That the king swore to extirpate heresy out of his kingdom, and never to make either peace or truce with the Heretics, nor pass one edict in their favour; and that all his subjects should swear, not to receive, after his death, as king, either an heretical prince, or favourer of the Heretics: that all places should be given to Catholics: that his subjects should break off all intelligence, leagues, and associations, either without doors or within: that a general pardon should be passed; and in particular for the Day of the Barricades, supposing all was done through zeal for religion,’ &c. the only article advantageous to the king. The surrender of the Bastile was never executed; others, in some degree, delivered themselves to the discretion of the factious. The more pliant government was in these storms, the more the chiefs of party took advantage of circumstances.

The

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 255

The prodigious armament of Philip II. to which they gave the name of Invincible Fleet, perhaps determined the court to yield in so shameful a manner. This fleet, composed of one hundred and fifty large vessels, where the master of Peru had employed all his strength, with a design of dethroning Elizabeth, seemed to threaten France as well as England; but it was beaten by the winds and by the English, in such a manner, that the undertaking absolutely produced nothing. The king, ashamed of the abasement to which he had been reduced by the leaguers, at length resolved to make use of some authority. Those who had advised him to mildness and reconciliation, lost his confidence; the queen-mother in particular, who, indifferent to all parties, sacrificed every thing to the ambition of governing. The States General were assembled at Blois; they made new demands, such as were still more aggravating; they insisted that he should exclude the crown from the king of Navarre by name, who was already excluded, in quality of Heretic, by the treaty of Rouen: they proposed anew the publication of the council of Trent; an infallible means by which the duke of Guise attached himself to the court of Rome. This proposal excited violent disputes

256 ELEMENTS OF THE

putes on the subject of the liberties of the Gallic church. Some Prelates dared to represent those liberties as chimeras invented against the authority of the Holy See; but the advocate-general of the court of judicature defended them in good French, as an ancient common right, which France had been happy enough to preserve.

The marquisate of Saluces being invaded, under pretence of zeal, by the duke of Savoy, who was believed to hold intelligence with Henry of Guise; the designs of this last mentioned prince, whose end evidently appeared to be dethroning the monarch; the insolence of the sixteen, who were all devoted to him, and who held the reins of dominion in the third state; resentment, choler, fear, all determined Henry to put to death the head of a party already grown so powerful, that he obscured, by his great qualities, almost all the princes of his time. ‘It was not a panic terror,’ says Mr. Henault, ‘but the fear of enterprises which he had formed. He found himself in like circumstances to those from which Pepin had profited. Henry III. was not unlike the last kings of the last race; and the pretence of religion had raised up popes of the same humour as Zachary.’

It

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 257

It appeared impossible, in such circumstances, to prosecute a duke, whose power in the kingdom was prodigious. An assassination was the most sure way, and they gave themselves little concern about its being the most odious. The king proposed this office to the brave Crillon: Crillon replied, That he would undertake to kill this hero in single combat; but that the office of an executioner was not at all suitable to him. The murderers were then chosen among the guards known by the name of the Forty-five. Henry distributing their poignards to them, said, 'It is an act of justice that I command you to perform on the most criminal man in my kingdom: laws both human and divine permit me to punish him; but I cannot do it according to the common course of justice; I therefore authorize you to do it, by the right of my royal power.' The duke of Guise received advice from several different places, that mischief was plotting against him. A billet, which he found under his napkin at dinner, denounced his approaching catastrophe. He wrote on this billet with a pencil, 'They dare not;' and threw it under the table. His intrepidity was his ruin. The satellites wounded him even in the chamber with the king: they killed him.

him with many wounds. The next day they assassinated the cardinal of Guise, his brother, a man as violent as the duke was careful and circumspect in his steps. This famous author of the holy league, who had always religion in his mouth, was so little a Christian in his manners, that he could scarcely dissemble his libertinism; and was once carried so far, as to challenge the third brother of the duke of Mayenne to fight a duel, on account of jealousy for his mistress. After these two great men were assassinated, their corpse were burnt, and their cinders scattered in the air, for fear that it should be an object of fanaticism to the people; and that they should render to their pretended relicts the same worship as they did to martyrs.

Instead of flying to Paris with his troops, and taking advantage of the first consternation which the leaguers were thrown into, the king fell back into his general indolence: he took no measure, nor gave any one order to prevent seditions. Very soon all Paris was in a flame; the sixteen abandoned themselves to the last excess: their preachers changed Christian morality into maxims of rebellion and vengeance: some of them exacted from their audience an oath to revenge the massacred princes. The Sorbonne declared the subjects of France:

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 259

France delivered from their obligations towards their sovereign. Threescore and ten doctors signed this decree, and they gave it as the unanimous opinion of the body, though there were some opponents among the elders. Confession served to inspire this crime, by making it be looked on as a means of absolution by the greatest part of the church. Some there were who had imbibed the sentiments of rebellion.

When the ministers of religion forget themselves in this manner, others have no restraint. Bussi le Clerc, a procurator, to whom the duke of Guise had confided the care of the Bastile, as to the most furious of the sixteen, shewed himself at the palace, followed by a troop of satellites. He presented a request to the parliament, conformable to the decree of the Sorbonne, that the subjects were free from their oath of fidelity. Not finding this company in the disposition to grant what he exacted, he ordered the first president, and some others, to follow him. All the parliament rose, following Achilles of Harlai; he forced them into the Bastile, and formed a new parliament, composed of magistrates the least suspected by the leaguers. The request of Bussi le Clerc was passed, the league confirmed, and a resolution taken by oath, to revenge the death of the duke and the cardinal of Guise,

460 ELEMENTS OF THE

Guise, against all those who had been the authors or accomplices of that assassination. Against this multitude of attempts the king opposed nothing but manifestos and apologies. He lost his mother Catherine of Medicis, who for fifty years had, by her ambitious genius and politic perfidy, fomented every faction which served to support her own authority. Though she had always hated the king of Navarre, she recommended it to her son, with her dying breath, to reconcile himself with him; and added, that he could no otherwise re-establish peace in the kingdom, than by granting liberty of conscience. The German princes, and several other sovereigns of his age, having never been able by arms to pacify the troubles caused by religion, necessity gave weight to this double council, founded on palpable experience.

A new chief had filled up the place of the duke of Guise. It was the duke of Mayenne, less lively, less daring; but in all other things a worthy successor of his brother. He had been at Lyons during the time that the states were held at Blois. Henry III. having not secured his person by force, vainly endeavoured to gain it by negotiations. We may well imagine, that the murder of his brothers excited his hatred, and authorised his refusal. The leaguers
and

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 261

and their parliament (the king having transferred the parliament of Paris to Tours) declared him lieutenant-general of the crown of France. They made him king under another name ; for they supposed the throne vacant, and that they could not do better than fill it by him. A number of considerable cities strongly embraced the side of the duke, and there remained only with the king some provinces held by the authority of the governors. In these fatal circumstances, he at length treated with Henry IV. whom he had forced to be his enemy. This great prince, in spite of the terrors of his court, hesitated not to put himself into the hands of the monarch. It was a very hazardous step, after so many examples of perfidy ; but the confidence of a hero, especially excited by the public good, carried him above all personal considerations. The two kings tenderly embraced each other, and closely united against the league.

We shall pass over all unnecessary details; nevertheless I cannot help taking notice of one particular circumstance, which can never be too much imprinted in the memory of man. La Noue, a gentleman of Brittany, the glory of the Protestants, and even admired by the Catholics themselves (so much does virtue gain the ascendant over all hearts) came

came readily to succour Senlis, which the army of the sixteen had taken. Ammunition was wanted there; it was all ready, but the traders refused to deliver it without money or some certain pledge. La Noue addressed himself to the farmers of the revenue, who had enriched themselves in the service of the king; but not one of them opened their purses. Full of indignation at their avaricious ingratitude, 'It is very well,' said he, 'I will myself then take upon me this expence. Let him keep his money who esteems it more than his honour: while I have a drop of blood, or an inch of earth, I will employ them both for the defence of my country.' Immediately he engaged his estates to the tradesmen, flew to the succour of Senlis, defeated the leaguers, and saved the place.

The union of the two kings was a subject of alarm to the Romish court. Though Sextus V. had no regard for the league, he favoured it out of policy. The massacre of the duke of Guise had appeared to him an act of necessary justice; but that of a cardinal, and the imprisonment of some prelates, were crying attempts against the church and the Holy See. In vain the king demanded absolution, without having been anathematized. This

austere

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 263

austere pope, who had the ambition of governing sovereigns, seeing him leagued with an heretical prince, fulminated against him monitory letters, by which he ordered him to set the cardinal of Bourbon at liberty, and cited him to appear before him in sixty days, either in person or by proxy, declaring him excommunicated by virtue of the bull in *Cæna Domini*, if he did not inform the Holy See in an authentic manner of his obedience in the space of thirty days. This bull in *Cæna Domini*, published in 1568 by Pius V. which had been always rejected in France and in some other states, but had been constantly read in Rome on Holy Thursday, was a principal object for the immunities of the church, and for excommunicating princes who exacted from ecclesiastics any contributions which they were unwilling to grant. The numerous excommunications which it made, were all reserved for the pope. It passed that censure on some who were called to the future councils of his decrees or sentences, and some who were submitted to general council. All France was put under interdiction by virtue of this bull. One cannot conceive the use of renewing what had been so long disused. But how much inconceivably does abuse take root by custom in all parts of the world!

The

the timid king was struck with consternation at the monitory from Rome; and Henry IV. had a great deal of trouble to encourage him: 'Let us vanquish,' said he, 'and we shall have absolution; but if we are beaten, we shall be excommunicated with aggravations and reaggravations.' In effect, the cardinal of Joyeuse had written from Rome, that they should give or refuse absolution according to the fate of their arms. He besieged Paris, and stifled the league by his strength. An aid of sixteen thousand Swiss, whom Sanci, master of the requests, obtained without money, by a prodigy of zeal and knowledge, put the royal army in a condition to form this enterprise. The king took St. Cloud on the twenty-ninth of July. It was there that fanaticism made its sacrifice. A young Dominican priest, named James Clement, his head, heated by the declaration of the preachers, by the current doctrine of regicide, and by the daily discourses of enthusiasts, thought himself inspired to deliver the kingdom from a tyrant; for they gave no other name to Henry III. Bourgoin, his prior, confirmed him in his resolution. There is reason to believe that people of the first rank had been the instigators of this delusion; and the dutchess of Montpensier, sister

HISTORY OF FRANCE. 265

sister to the duke of Guise, was particularly suspected. A number of passports and letters of credit, which Clement received from St. Cloud, were presented by him to the king, under pretence of having essential things to say to him. In cold blood, like a villain, he plunged his dagger into his heart. Henry III. died the next day, in the arms of the king of Navarre, whom he called his brother and successor. The race of Valois being extinct, the crown belonged to him as first prince of the blood. If the religious paricide had not been killed upon the spot, they would, without doubt, have forced from him strange secrets. The transports of the Parisians after this event appeared in the spirit of the league. James Clement was honoured as a saint. In the pulpits they compared him to Judith, who had cut off the head of Holofernes. They put up his image on the altars. The pope, on his account, expressed himself of the same way of thinking with the leaguers. Almost all the Catholic divines maintained this atrocious and absurd doctrine, which excited murder, or even regicide, for the defence of the church.

Nothing better proves the spirit of party than the falseness of that zeal which can extinguish not only the lights of reason,

but even those of religion. It must be confessed, that the conduct of Henry III. contributed not a little to inspire this madness; superstition, joined to his other vices, rendered him equally despicable and odious. He is reproached with the massacre of St. Bartholomew; and the Catholics seem to be the revengers of the Protestants. This prince, by an ordinance of 1579 declared, that the Plebeians who bought fiefs of the nobles, should not by that purchase be themselves ennobled, nor take rank as such: from whence the possession of the fiefs were no longer able to ennoble those that belonged to them. This abuse introduced itself through the licence of government, and debased the nobility, by rendering it too common. It was likewise contrary to the prerogative of the sovereign, who had the sole right of conferring honour. Henry IV. in the same manner, suppressed that which was acquired by the profession of arms. In order to be ennobled, it was necessary to procure letters from the king, or from an office to which this privilege was attached.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



*Lately published, by the same Author,
in Four Vols. 12mo, Price 12 s.*

E L E M E N T S
OF THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND,
FROM THE
INVASION OF THE ROMANS
TO THE
REIGN OF GEORGE II.
TRANSLATED BY MRS. BROOKE.

Printed for J. DODSLEY in Pall-mall, and
T. CADELL in the Strand.

Laid down by the House of Commons
 in March 1801. Printed by
 W. L. A. M. E. T. S.
 OF THE
 HISTORY OF ENGLAND
 FROM THE
 INVASION OF THE ROMANS
 TO THE
 REIGN OF GEORGE II.
 Translated by Mrs. BROOKE
 Printed by J. D. in Pall-mall, and
 T. Cadell in the Strand.



